DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 459 980 RC 023 334

AUTHOR Perritt, Denise Chapell
TITLE The Impact of School and Contextual Factors on the Graduation Rates of Virginia Migrant Students.
PUB DATE 2001-12-00
NOTE 101p.; Edited by William Rutherford Perritt. Ph.D. Dissertation, College of William and Mary.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Doctoral Dissertations (041)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Dropouts; Educational Attainment; *English (Second Language); Extended Family; *Family Influence; *High School Graduates; *Hispanic Americans; Limited English Speaking; *Migrant Education; Poverty; Secondary Education; Social Bias; Social Isolation
IDENTIFIERS *Virginia

ABSTRACT

This study analyzed common factors among Virginia Migrant Education Program students who had earned a high school diploma as compared with those who had not. Data on 50 Hispanic migrant students were gathered from a collection of diverse documents from various school divisions and states. All subjects had been enrolled in the Virginia Migrant Education Program during the 1999-2000 school year and were 18-19 years old in June 2000. School-related and contextual factors reviewed included student age and gender, home language, number of schools attended, rate of attendance, participation in educational programs, grade promotion/retention, graduation status, and family structure. Eleven of the 50 students graduated from high school. Among school-related factors, attendance in U.S. schools positively impacted a migrant student's chance of completing high school. The number of schools attended was not as important as attendance in U.S. schools. Among contextual factors, students who lived with their parents and extended family had a greater chance of completing high school than those who did not. Qualitative findings obtained upon review of student essays indicate that 40 percent of students were concerned with one or more of the following issues: poverty, mobility, English as a second language, and social isolation. Mobility was mentioned most frequently. Implications and recommendations for further research and practice are discussed. Three appendices present summaries of school-related factors, contextual factors, and written statements in table form. (Contains 91 references.) (TD)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 459 980

THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL AND CONTEXTUAL FACTORS ON THE GRADUATION RATES OF VIRGINIA MIGRANT STUDENTS

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Education

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Written by

Denise Chapell Perritt

Edited by

William Rutherford Perritt

December 2001

RC 023334

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Denise C. Perritt

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL AND CONTEXTUAL FACTORS ON THE GRADUATION RATES OF VIRGINIA MIGRANT STUDENTS

By

Denise Chapell Perritt

Approved December 2001 by

James H. Stronge, Ph.D.
Chairperson of Doctoral Committee

Robert J. Hanny, Ph.D.

David W. Leslie, Ed.D.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to migrant children and their families with the utmost respect and gratitude for all they do on a daily basis to put food on our tables and to their efforts to improve the quality of their own lives by furthering their education.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I THE PROBLEM
Introduction....1
Theoretical Rationale....4
Statement of the Problem....7
Purpose of the Study....8
Research Questions....9
Operational Definitions....9
Significance of the Study....10
Limitations of the Study....11
Delimitations of the Study....11
Major Assumptions....11

CHAPTER II REVIEW OF LITERATURE
Migrant Farm Workers....12
Hispanic Students....14
Hispanic Dropouts....16
Migrant Student Dropout Rates....19
Reasons Migrant Students Dropout....20
Consequences of Dropping Out....22
Efforts to Reduce the Dropout Rate....23
Migrant Education Programs....24
Underlying Beliefs of the Migrant Education Program....24
Exemplary Technological Interventions for Migrant Students....25
What are the Special Needs of Migrant Secondary Students?....27

CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY
Purpose of the Study....29
Research Questions....29
Methodology....30
Population and Sample....30
Content for Review....30
Procedures for Compiling Qualitative Data....31
Procedures for Compiling Quantitative Data....32
Data Analysis....32
Thematic Analysis....33
Ethical Standards and Considerations....38

CHAPTER IV RESULTS
Introduction....39
Characteristics of the Sample....40
Common School-related Factors among Virginia MEP Students....41
Common Contextual Factors among Virginia Migrant Education Program Students....48

Summary of Qualitative Data..... 51
Analysis of Student Statements..... 52

CHAPTER V EMERGING THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS
Limitations of the Study.....58
Summary of Findings..... 59
Discussion of Findings..... 60
Qualitative Findings.....67
Implications..... 68
Recommendations for Further Research.....70
Recommendations for Practice.....71

APPENDICES
Appendix A: Summary of Student Findings: School-Related Factor.....83
Appendix B: Summary of Student Findings: Contextual Factors.....85
Appendix C: Sample of Written Statements.....87

List of Tables

Table 1: Summary of Student Age

Table 2: Summary of Student Gender

Table 3: Number of K-12 Schools Attended

Table 4: Chi-Square Analysis of K-12 Schools Attended

Table 5: Number of States in which Students Attended School

Table 6: Countries in which Students Attended School

Table 7: Chi-Square Analysis of Countries in which Students Attended School

Table 8: Number of Students Receiving Special Education Services

Table 9: Chi-Square Analysis of Students Receiving Special Education Services

Table 10: Number of Students Receiving English as a Second Language Instruction

Table 11: Chi-Square Analysis of Students Receiving ESL Instruction

Table 12: Number of Students Retained

Table 13: Chi-Square Analysis of Students Retentions

Table 14: Student Immediate Family Structure

Table 15: Chi-Square Analysis of Immediate Family Structure

Table 16: Student Extended Family Structure

Table 17: Chi-Square Analysis of Student Extended Family Structure

Table 18: Number of Student Siblings

Table 19: Student Position in Family

Table 20: Summary of Student Essays

Table 21: Summary of Specific Student Statements According to Number of Times Included in Written Essays

Table 22: High School Completion Rates by Gender

Acknowledgements

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to Silvia Romero and her family who graciously invited me into their home and spoke freely about their experiences as migrants. I am equally grateful to the exceptional Virginia Migrant Education Program staff with whom I had the supreme privilege to work from 1994-2000. I especially wish to thank George Irby for his leadership at the Virginia Department of Education and all my former colleagues in the Office of Compensatory Programs, especially Cheryl Strobel, Cheryl Gray Ball and Dianne Pollard, for their support and encouragement; and, Katy Pitcock for her persistence in following up on incomplete student records.

I am also indebted to my committee, especially Dr. Stronge for his patience; Dr. Hanny for his encouragement; and, Dr. Leslie for his savvy. I wish to thank all my fellow William and Mary doctoral students who graciously contributed their encouraging words, wisdom and experience throughout this journey, but especially, Jamie Arkin, Elissa Brown, Carole Geiger and Phil Iovino. Your exemplary works were an inspiration to me.

Also inspirational were my father, Donald R. Chapell, and my father-in-law, Donald R. Perritt, who lived and died heroically; my mother, Beverly A. Chapell, and mother-in-law, Margaret J. Perritt, whose bravery is a daily inspiration; and my dear husband, William and daughter, Anna. I could not have done this without William's willingness to cook, clean, baby-sit, and edit whenever and wherever necessary to allow me to attend classes, study and write; and, Anna's back rubs and tender words of encouragement.

THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL AND CONTEXTUAL FACTORS ON THE GRADUATION RATES OF VIRGINIA MIGRANT STUDENTS

ABSTRACT

This study analyzed common factors among 18 and 19-year-old Virginia Migrant Education Program Hispanic students who earned a high school diploma as compared with those who did not. Data reviewed include the students' age, gender, home language, number of schools attended, rate of attendance, participation in educational programs, grade promotion/retention, graduation status and family structure.

The following overarching questions guided this study: (a) What common school-related factors exist among Hispanic Migrant Education Program students who earned a high school diploma in Virginia; (b) What common contextual (i.e. family, language, work) factors exist among Hispanic Migrant Education Program students who earned a high school diploma in Virginia; (c) What common school-related factors exist among Hispanic Migrant Education Program students who did not earn a high school diploma in Virginia; and, (d) What common contextual (i.e. family, language, work) factors exist among Hispanic Migrant Education Program students who did not earn a high school diploma in Virginia? Since this study sought to understand the educational experiences yielding successful high school completion for migrant students, both straight counting of graduates and an in-depth review of student records detailing the educational career of the student were necessary.

DENISE CHAPELL PERRITT

PROGRAM OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY IN VIRGINIA

The Impact of School and Contextual Factors on the Graduation Rates of Virginia Migrant Students

Chapter 1: The Problem

Introduction

Edward R. Murrow's "Harvest of Shame" television program aired Thanksgiving evening 1960, exposing the hard working, exploited and desperate plight of the migrant farm worker. Over 40 years later, migrant farm workers continue to be one of the most industrious, yet under-rewarded populations in this country (National Commission on Migrant Education, 1992). Migrant farm workers and their families travel thousands of miles annually to work for below-minimum wage conducting menial and hazardous labor. Most migrant workers are foreign-born and travel between countries (Gabbard, Mines & Steirman, 1997). How does this migratory lifestyle impact a student's ability to earn a high school diploma? Farm worker children are disadvantaged educationally and linguistically by separation from parents and by periodic migration (Gabbard et al., 1997). The Slaughter & Associates (1991) report described migrant farm workers as the poorest of the working poor. On average, they seldom earn more than $6,000 a year. Regardless of the rise and fall of economic indices, migrant workers permanently qualify for the "below poverty level" list. Migrant farm workers are the prime example of a growing underclass who cannot escape poverty by means of hard work.

Frequent relocation (migration) is a widespread problem for migrant children. Seasonal employment is the primary reason migrant families relocate; however, divorce and financial instability may also require a family to relocate. Children of migrant farm workers with limited proficiency in English, from low-income families and from inner

cities move more frequently than children from rural, middle-income families who are proficient in English. Each of these individual characteristics is associated with lower academic performance (MPR, 1992; GAO, 1994). Specifically, third graders who change schools frequently are 15% more likely to be below grade level in reading and two-and-a half times more likely to repeat a grade than third graders who have not changed schools (GAO, 1994).

Nationally, 70% of migrant families are Hispanic (Gabbard et al., 1997), while 90% of migrant education program students in Virginia are Hispanic. Due to limited research on the larger migrant population (studies which are almost 20 years old) research on Hispanic student achievement is included here as well as research on mobility and its effects upon student achievement.

Hispanics enter school later than their non-Hispanic peers; lack adequate oral and written language skills (regardless of whether they are bilingual, speak only English or only Spanish); leave school earlier; and receive proportionally fewer high school diplomas and college degrees than their non-Hispanic peers (Espinosa, 1998). The dropout rate for Hispanic youth has remained at levels consistently higher than for white and black peers since the early 1970s (NCES, 1995). Poverty, teenage pregnancy, substance abuse, lack of parental support and the language barrier contribute to high dropout rates among Hispanics (GAO, 1997). Furthermore, Hispanic dropouts are less likely to return and finish their high school degrees than their Asian, black and white peers (NCES, 1989).

Migrant students drop out for many reasons. Academic performance and grade retention are often cited as primary reasons students decide to drop out, but Guffain

(1991) found migrant students who dropped out had more at-risk factors than those who graduated. Guffain (1991) found the average number of school changes for those who dropped out is 17.5 while those who graduated experienced 10.3 school changes. Also, students who left school before graduating had attendance rates of 72.7% while graduates' attendance rates were 90%. Other factors reported to affect migrant student graduation rates include poor grades and age-grade discrepancies (Martinez, 1994). Migrant high school dropout rates ranged from 45% - 65% in two studies (Levy, 1987; Vamos, 1992) tracking students from sixth grade or later. A high "disappearance" rate of migrant students impeded such studies as students were lost when they no longer qualified for services or moved and were not located again.

Interrupted school attendance and lack of continuity in curriculum also raise the drop out rate, preventing migrant students from accruing course credits. Although students in the U.S. are highly mobile -- a factor generally detrimental to student achievement -- the issue of student mobility has not received much attention from educational researchers, practitioners or policy makers (Rumberger, Larson, Palardy, Ream & Schleicher, 1998).

The consequences of dropping out of high school affect both the non-completer and society in general. Economic and social costs of the Hispanic dropout problem are escalating for many reasons. First, the Hispanic population is rapidly growing, in both absolute numbers and as a proportion of U.S. students. Second, fewer dropouts will find employment because upgraded workforce skills are required for individuals to succeed. Third, increasingly advanced knowledge and skills are required to fully participate in society (i.e. vote intelligently, make smart consumer decisions). Fourth, labor force

productivity and income must expand to help meet the increasing needs of senior citizens. Finally, children of the future will be strongly affected by their parents' income and education levels (GAO, 1996).

Personal consequences of dropping out are many. They include limited employment opportunities because today's workforce requires increased literacy, more education, enhanced technological skills and lifelong learning. Although cited in the literature as personal consequences of dropping out, the following also impact society: Higher risk of premature sexual activity, early pregnancy, delinquency, crime, violence, alcohol and drug abuse, and suicide (School dropouts: The extent and nature of the problem, 1987). A higher likelihood of dependence on welfare and other social programs result from greater income differences between dropouts and other citizens. Finally, the economy pits Americans with less education against computerized machines and people in low-wage nations. If high dropout rates continue to be tolerated, a large American underclass will increasingly threaten our "continuing existence of a democratic way of life" (Asche, 1993, p. 13).

Theoretical Rationale

A key contribution to increasing the number of migrant Hispanic high school graduates is likely to be the design and support of research informing educators and the public about which student experiences determine whether or not these students complete secondary school. In this light, steps are needed to move the field away from the atheoretical stance (characterizing much of the work to date) and toward developing and advancing theoretical concepts that treat retention, graduation, and completion as consequences of a dynamic interaction among variables such as student characteristics,

school context and cultural influences. The theoretical framework for this study includes: social capital; achievement motivation; social bonding; and, authentic education.

James Coleman's (1990) concept of "social capital" recognizes the importance of a network of sustained personal connections to convey expectations and conventional norms, and which can be acquired through rich and extensive interaction with adults. Weak social capital describes the failure of families to communicate shared expectations and norms, as well as sanctions for not meeting those norms. According to the theory, the development of social capital by children is significant because it contributes to their readiness to internalize school norms and expectations. These expectations require personal effort to develop the knowledge and skills that make up human capital, without which children may drop out of school unprepared for responsible participation in mainstream society. Put in simpler terms, "The Spanish kids often feel very left out of a lot of stuff going on," according to Carla Gamboa, 18, who came to the U.S. at age 12. "You see the white students in the halls, but it's two different worlds. We should have more power. But we don't" (Wax, 2001).

Achievement motivation includes the effects that perceived opportunity, future orientation, and incentives might have on students' academic behavior, as well as on their transition from youth to adulthood. For example, if we want virtually all youth to complete 12 years or more of schooling, strong, credible social and economic incentives will be necessary to attract and keep youth who start life in socially and economically marginal circumstances. Disproportionate numbers of poor and minority children develop the view that they are at a disadvantage in school as well as in the marketplace and respond with antisocial behavior and an indifference to learning. The roles that

membership, social bonding, interpersonal caring, and community play in convincing migrant Hispanic youth to overcome their sense of alienation and develop an emotional attachment to social institutions such as school will be studied. For example, engaging alienated students in the tasks of academic work requires school and learning are viewed as legitimate, fair, and worthwhile (Coleman, 1990).

Authentic education requires clarity of purpose that unites students in the pursuit of common goals rather than distracting them with a "something for everyone" curriculum. Schoolwork involving the learning of skills and content with meaning and motivational appeal to the student is the goal. Students are intrinsically interested in the materials to be mastered so they study and learn of their own volition; develop a sense of ownership derived from personal choice rather than by the imposition of authority; and understand the relationship of schooling to his or her personal and working life (Coleman, 1990).

These dynamic theories, among others like them, represent dropouts as students who are part of a social world and who interact with the people and institutions that surround them. As such, the theories offer a rationale for dropout programs based on the motivating properties of student life, rather than the unexamined assumptions that accompany mere membership in the at-risk categories. Accordingly, theories such as these offer an opportunity to replace the "head counting" and descriptive statistics that have, to date, characterized both research on dropouts and dropout prevention with explanations of behavior that offer a far more powerful and sophisticated rationale for future research and the design of dropout prevention programs.

Statement of the Problem

Currently, the migrant student population in Virginia is 91% Hispanic (Irby, 2000). Thus, this researcher finds it logical to include statistics concerning the success of Hispanic students in general as well as research concerning migrancy and mobility, specifically.

Hispanic students enter our schools with about the same ability as others to become active and successful students, though many drop out prior to graduation (Vazquez, 1996). These students come to U.S. schools with high expectations for success, but a significant number reach high school with limited understanding of their education opportunities (Vazquez, 1996; Nieto, 1995). Furthermore, many Hispanic students enter school with the competitive edge of knowing Spanish, but a significant number leave school without advancing those language skills (Cummins, 1986; Walsh, 1991).

Educational research focused on the achievement of minority populations has attempted to highlight some of causes of the disproportionate Hispanic dropout rate. Individual "deficiencies" are a major obstacle for specific student achievement (Nieto, 1995; Fine, 1991). Recent studies have consistently shown social categories such as gender, race, class and ethnic differences hinder learning opportunities (Nieto, 1995; Fine, 1991). Research into the educational experiences of Hispanic students shows they receive less attention from their teachers, and perceive their interactions with teachers and other school personnel as negative (Ortiz & Volkoff, 1987). Additionally, cultural differences between school personnel and Hispanic students tend to marginalize the life experiences of the student in the school and curriculum enough that many students leave

school to preserve their cultural identity. These disenfranchised Hispanic students believe school is an oppressive place where they exist only by denying their individual identities, whereas their homes and communities are "real" and supportive of their identities (Cummins, 1989; Walsh, 1991).

The school system separates students first and then they separate themselves. Poverty and social class also influences differences in curriculum, instruction, and the physical condition of school facilities (Anyon, 1988). According to Anyon, curriculum and instruction enhance creativity, problem-solving, and critical thinking in schools within wealthy communities. However, in working-class schools curriculum and instruction are highly dependent upon drill, skill, and memorization while making little attempt to create conditions for higher-level thinking and creative use of students' abilities (Anyon, 1988). Once the school system has created this curriculum divide, students readily see the lack of diversity in higher-level courses and believe "those classes are not for me" (Wax, 2001).

Purpose of the Study

The intent of this study was to analyze data on current 18-19-year-old Virginia Migrant Education Program Hispanic students to identify common factors among students who earn a high school diploma compared with those who do not. Data reviewed include the students' age, gender, home language, number of schools attended, rate of attendance, and participation in educational programs, grade promotion/retention, graduation status, and family structure.

Research Questions

This study was based upon the following overarching questions:

1. What common school-related factors exist among Hispanic Migrant Education Program students who earned a high school diploma in Virginia?

2. What common contextual (i.e. family, language, work) factors exist among Hispanic Migrant Education Program students who earned a high school diploma in Virginia?

3. What common school-related factors exist among Hispanic Migrant Education Program students who did not earn a high school diploma in Virginia?

4. What common contextual (i.e. family, language, work) factors exist among Hispanic Migrant Education Program students who did not earn a high school diploma in Virginia?

Operational Definitions

This section provides operational definitions of key terms used throughout this study.

Academic success

For the purposes of this study, academic success is defined as completion of the requirements for a high school diploma.

Contextual factors

Contextual factors are individual student characteristics, which contribute to the life experiences of migrant students, but are not provided or determined by the school. These characteristics include the student's age, gender, family structure, and home language.

Dropout

A dropout is an individual of school age who, regardless of reason, chose to withdraw from school prior to completing the requirements for a high school diploma.

Hispanic

For the purposes of this study, the term "Hispanic" includes students whose first language is Spanish.

Migrant student

For the purposes of this study, "migrant student" is defined as any 3-21-year-old child of a migratory agricultural worker, migratory fisher, or migratory worker who harvests America's forests and is in need of supplemental instruction and support services in health and nutrition in order to succeed in school.

Mobility

For the purposes of this study, mobility includes family-related moves, which require changing residences and schools at least once within a three-year period.

School-related factors

For the purposes of this study, school-related factors include: Participation in special educational programs; number of schools attended; rate of attendance; grade promotion/retention; and, graduation status.

Significance of the Study

Building intervention decisions on student, family, school, and community factors which support student success is a proactive approach to individual and system-wide planning (Simeonsson, 1994; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Reed-Victor, 1998) and provides a specific framework for creating collaborative services across programs. To

formulate proactive program planning, two areas must be studied: 1) individual student characteristics; and, 2) family, school and community contextual factors. This study analyzed data on Virginia Migrant Education Program students (ages 18-19 as of June, 2000) in an effort to better understand the supportive factors essential to the academic success of the migrant child.

Limitations of the Study

This study produced limited generalizability for the following reasons:

1. The population from which students were selected was limited to students enrolled in the Virginia Migrant Education Program during school year 1999-2000.
2. The study was limited to students who were 18-19 years old as of June 30, 2000.

Delimitations

The researcher delimited the study in the following ways:

1. Only Migrant Education Program students who have attended school in Virginia for a minimum of six months were included in the study.
2. The researcher selected students based upon data available on all Migrant Education Program students in Virginia via the Regional Migrant Center in Accomack, Virginia.

Major Assumptions

The researcher held the following assumption:

All Migrant Education Program student records obtained through the database in the Regional Migrant Program Education Center in Accomack, Virginia, were current and accurate.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

The literature review will address issues related to both Hispanic and migrant workers and how factors of mobility and second language acquisition influence migrant farm worker children's success in school.

Migrant Farm Workers

The National Agricultural Worker Survey (1997) found migrant farm workers were 94% Hispanic, 80% of whom were Mexican born. Six to ten percent of migrants are white or black Americans. Some migrants live in housing that does not meet minimum inspection standards, and many suffer from occupationally-related health problems such as farm injuries and pesticide poisoning or health problems related to poverty, malnutrition, and poor sanitation (Huang, 1993).

The average migrant farm worker in Virginia earns $255 per week (Alwang, Lamie & Trupo, 1997). The irony of this statistic is that without the impoverished migrant workforce in Virginia, the employment rate would decrease by 12,000 to 13,000 jobs which translates to an economic loss of $126 to $148 million in personal income (Alwang et. al., 1997).

How does the migrant lifestyle affect school–age children? Several factors associated with the migrant lifestyle predispose migrant students to leave school without completing the requirements for a high school diploma (Baca & Harris, 1988; Martinez, Scott, Cranston-Gingras & Platt, 1994). Sporadic school attendance, traveling from one temporary site to another, and limited English proficiency limit the academic success rates of migrant children. Farm worker children are disadvantaged by educational and linguistic handicaps; by separation from parents; by periodic migration (Gabbard, Mines

& Boccalandro, 1994); and, by poverty. According to the 1990 census, poor families move 50% to 100% more often than non-poor families. Approximately 30% of children in low-income families change schools annually versus 8% of children well above poverty and frequent school changes have been correlated with lower academic achievement (GAO, 1994).

Migrant children not only move between school districts and states, but also between countries. Over the last five years, the regional Migrant Education Program (MEP) in Colonial Beach has seen a dramatic increase in the number of families who migrate between Mexico and the U.S. (Abney, 2000). The vast differences between schooling in Mexico and the U.S. place increased stress upon students and teachers as they seek to assimilate different education requirements, laws and policies; behavioral expectations and curricula into a program of study which will ultimately allow the student to graduate. "Migrant children, since the timing of subjects differs from school district to school district, often get half a subject every time they change schools (Trotter, 1988, p. 9)." According to Julisa Velarde, "Sometimes my class is studying something higher and I have to catch up when I come back"(Atkin, 1993). Compounding these learning gaps is the variance in graduation requirements such that a student may meet the graduation requirements in one school district and not in another (Celcelski, personal communication, October 26, 2000). This phenomenon, in turn, causes students to exhibit negative attitudes toward school and education in general (Wrigley, personal communication, October 26, 2000).

Social isolation is another characteristic exhibited by students who frequently move. Highly transient children have difficulty relating to peers (Schaller, 1975).

Children who move frequently are 77% more likely to exhibit multiple behavior problems than those who moved infrequently (Wood, Halfon, Scarlata, Newacheck, & Nessim, 1993).

> When we move, sometimes I don't remember where I am. Once in Yuma, I woke up in the middle of the night, and saw my aunt and I didn't know where I was. I was scared because I thought I was still in Salinas and I didn't know what she was doing there. To remember better where I am, I bring special things with me. (Julisa Velarde in Arkin, 1993)

Hispanic Students

As stated earlier, 94% of the migrant farm worker population is Hispanic (Martin, 1994). Therefore, research concerning the achievement of Hispanic students is germane in addressing concerns about migrant student achievement. The Hispanic population is the largest and fastest growing minority group in the U.S. (Espinosa, 1998). Yet, Hispanics, as a group, enter school later than their non-Hispanic peers; lack adequate oral and written language skills, regardless of whether they are bilingual; speak only English or only Spanish; leave school earlier; and receive proportionally-fewer high school diplomas and college degrees than their non-Hispanic peers (Espinosa, 1998). On any given day in the U.S., a higher proportion of Hispanic students drop out of school. Thus, the dropout rate for Hispanic youth has remains consistently higher than that for white and black peers since the early 1970s. In fact, the Hispanic dropout rate is only four percent lower than when national dropout data for Hispanics were first collected in 1972, and higher than it was 20 years ago (Lockwood & Secada, 1999). The 1998 dropout rate for Hispanic 16 through 24-year-olds in the U.S. was 30% or 1.5 million. (Latinos in

Education, 1999). This figure includes one in five Hispanic young adults who never enroll in U.S. schools. Reasons cited for students not enrolling in school include: language limitations, crowded schools, limited openings in special programs, personal and economic problems, cultural differences, and limited first-hand exposure to the intrinsic and extrinsic value of high school or post-secondary education (NCES, 1995). Also, Hispanic students are more frequently tracked into general courses satisfying only the basic requirements: 50% are enrolled in general programs, as compared with 40% of blacks and 39% of whites (Latinos in Education, 1999). The 30% dropout figure does not reflect the success of Hispanic students in U.S. schools is 19.6% and for foreign-born Hispanics enrolled in U.S. schools is 23.7%. These rates, although lower than the overall Hispanic dropout rate, are still higher than dropout rates for whites and blacks in the same age range, 8.6% and 12.1%, respectively (NCES, 1995).

According to the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) at the United States Department of Education (USDOE), Hispanic children born outside the U.S. who immigrate here have a 43% dropout rate (Smith, 1995). Dropping out is strongly related to the length of time a Hispanic family has lived in the U.S. and to the family's country of origin.

In 1995, 20.3 percent of Hispanics attending school in the U.S. and speaking Spanish in the home dropped out, compared to 17.5% of those who speaking only English in the home. While a larger percentage of Hispanic youth speaking Spanish at home never entered U.S. schools (22 versus four percent), once enrolled, Hispanic students who speak Spanish at home were equally likely to remain in school as peers speaking only English at home. Yet, among Hispanic students who spoke Spanish at

home, English-speaking ability was related to their success in school (NCES, 1995). Three-quarters (76.3%) of Hispanic 16 through 24-year-olds speaking Spanish at home reported they spoke English "well" or "very well." For this group, speaking Spanish at home was not an indication of limited English proficiency. However, the situation was reversed among Hispanic adults describing themselves as limited English proficient. Only one-quarter of this group reporting speaking English "not well" or "not at all" never enrolled in U.S. schools and lacked a high school education (NCES, 1995). English as a Second Language (ESL) programs are intended to broaden the educational and employment opportunities available to youths with limited ability in English. In 1995, 12.4% of Hispanic young adults who spoke English in the home had participated in ESL programs (NCES, 1995).

Hispanic Dropouts

While the national dropout rates for whites and blacks declined steadily over the past 25 years, the Hispanic dropout rate remains constant. Nationally, Hispanics drop out 2.5 times as often as blacks and 3.5 times as often as whites. Hispanics make up about 56% of all immigrants to the United States, but they account for nearly 90% of all immigrant dropouts (Benton, 2001). Further, current news publications are now referring to these dropout rates conversely as "completion rates", which sounds better, but conveys similar, disproportionate statistics. According to both the Washington Times and the Washington Post, both dated November 14, 2001, the Hispanic high school completion rate is both 52% and 67% respectively.

In an October 1999 study, the U.S. Census Bureau found the following dropout rates for Hispanic immigrants ages 16-24: Hispanics born outside the U.S.: 44.2%;

Hispanics, first generation (one or more parents born outside the U.S.): 16.1%; Hispanics, second generation or more: 16%. The overall dropout rate for Hispanics in this study was 28.6% as compared to 12.6% for blacks, 7.3% for whites and 4.3% for Asians. Further, according to the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, more than one third of Hispanics ages 15-17 are enrolled below grade level, an unfortunately large number given the fact that enrollment below grade level is the highest predictor of dropping out (Latinos in Education, 1999). More recently, Wetzstein (2001) reported a 48% Hispanic dropout rate.

Why is the dropout rate among Hispanics so high? Among the many explanations given to account for this phenomenon, the general press has advanced two in particular: Immigration and low socioeconomic status. However, dropout rates for Hispanics are higher than for non-Hispanics of similar immigration and socioeconomic status (Lockwood & Secada, 1999). Among foreign-born immigrants, 43% of Hispanics between the ages of 16 and 24 have dropped out versus eight percent of non-Hispanics. Also, while many Hispanic students live in poverty, Hispanic dropout rates are at least double those of other Americans at the same income level (NCES, 1998).

"Dropping out is not a random, causal act. According to some observers, dropping out of school is the logical outcome of the social forces that limit Hispanics' role in society" (Lockwood & Secada, 1999, p. 2). "Do they blend into the school and just assimilate? Or is the school changed by their culture?" (Wax, 2001). The answers to these questions affect school outcomes for Hispanic students. Angulo, 17, sums up the situation as follows: "We are too shy to be the leaders. We are even too shy to be the followers." Another student, Jimena, believes she and her Hispanic school mates' social roles are

limited by: Work, which allows little or no time for yearbook committee or sports; and, trouble simply coping with the transition from another country, lifestyle, and language (Wax, 2001). Silvia Rumero, 21, agrees. According to Sylvia, "It is very hard to work and concentrate on your studies at the same time. When you are at work, you are thinking, 'I need to by studying' and when you are at school, you are trying to stay awake and focused" (Rumero, personal communication, June 10, 2001).

Many Hispanic students live under economic stress and attend overcrowded schools, which are in disrepair, are inadequately staffed, and lack sufficient instructional materials. Hispanic youth see the devastating effects of their elders' limited employment opportunities; encounter stereotypes, personal prejudice, and social bias. Many Hispanics internalize the message that "The American dream is not for me" and drop out of school (Lockwood & Secada, 1999). Even so, according to the Hispanic Dropout Project's (1998) final report, *No More Excuses*, schools and communities can take specific actions to change educational outcomes for Hispanic students.

According to Mehan (1996) it is only through changing the nature of our discussion of the dropout problem that we can begin to create solutions. Previously, dropping out was viewed as a "character flaw, a personal pathology, or an individual choice" (Mehan, 1996, p.1). By representing dropping out within the parameters of individual student characteristics, the discourse participates in biased public policy debates. Mehan (1996) believes the more promising approach to the debate is to consider dropping out as a social and not a personal problem. Thus, the discussion centers on why society reproduces structures of inequity in the educational, economic, and civic domains of life. McDermott and Varenne (1995), Fine (1991), Swadener and Lubeck (1995) and

Trueba, Spindler and Spindler (1989) and this researcher hope to turn the prevailing discourse about dropping out as a failure of individuals into one which furnishes a different "way of talking that can unpack, inform, critique but still imagine what could be" (Fine, 1991, p. xiii).

Marcelo Suarez-Orozco and Carola Suarez-Orozco (2001) studied the social context from the "psychocultural" perspective. The couple, both professors at Harvard University Graduate School, conducted a study involving 27 Harvard researchers who recorded interviews with students and educators tracking student grades, living situations, immigration history, religious backgrounds, perceptions of American racial discrimination, how teachers treat students, how students treat each other and how the social/emotional context of school can drive the achievement gap. "Social engagement is very, very powerful. If they [students] are not socially engaged, they are not going to invest in themselves or in school."

Migrant Student Dropout Rates

In 1985, the Interstate Migrant Council analyzed data from the Migrant Student Network Transfer System (MSRTS, a national database for migrant student records) and found the migrant student dropout rate to be greater than 57%. Two years later, the Migrant Attrition Project, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, conducted a study, showing a 45% national dropout rate among migrant students, with a margin of error of plus or minus four percent (Levy, 1987). A cooperative effort among states serving high proportions of migrant students, the study used a national, stratified random sample of 1,000 migrant students. The only comparable study, done 12 years earlier, reported a 90% dropout rate. The more recent study concluded that, overall, strategies to

support migrant students' efforts to complete high school produced positive results (Salerno, 1991). Whatever the exact statistics might be, these data clearly suggest the dropout rate, although declining, remains high, in fact, far higher than national rates for black or Hispanic students generally (Kaufman & Frase, 1990).

Migrant students face the same risks as many impoverished, disadvantaged, highly mobile students. But, as a group, migrant students are more intensely at risk than the general population (Levy, 1987). Overage grade placement, for example, is among the most important of these conditions. Analysis of 1992 data from the MSRTS indicates that among current migrant students in grades 9-12, 50% were on grade level, 32% were one year below grade level, and 18% were two or more years below grade level. Thus, about half of all migrant students might reasonably be considered at-risk of dropping out. This fact is indeed borne out by the statistics mentioned in the previous paragraph.

Reasons Migrant Students Drop Out

According to the U.S. Department of Education, only about one in 10 migrant students completes 12th grade (Shulman, 2001). Surveys of dropouts show most migrant students leave school in 9th or 10th grade and failure in classes; dislike of school; and, extreme lack of credits are strongly correlated with students' quitting school (Morales, 1984). Medina (1982) reports little involvement in extracurricular activities; poor grades; extensive migration; dislike of school; and perception of being poorer than other students as contributing factors to dropping out. Hispanic students drop out feeling inferior and defeated by perceptions of others, including the worry that white people see a group of Hispanic students and think gang, thug, bad person (Wax, 2001). "You see this social separation happening at many high schools," according to Dana Moran, a high school

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

teacher in Beckley, California, who has been studying student life since 1998 as part of a diversity project with the University of California. "It's a part of high school life, and at diverse schools, it can end up leaving Hispanic students outside of many social activities that are going on" (Wax, 2001).

Limited fluency in English; history of transiency (Vega-Lugo, 1995); lack of self-assurance; support and clarity about goals (Gilchrist, 1983); perceived lack of family support and financial pressures (Nelken and Gallo, 1978); over-age; lack of interest in school; negative parental attitude (New York State Department of Education, 1965) and alienation (Wax, 2001) have also been cited as contributing to the high incidence of dropping out among migrant youth.

Poverty is a major condition influencing migrants to leave school early. DeMers (1988), for example, reported that the average income for a migrant family of 5.3 members was about $5,500 in 1988. The contribution of another working family member can help provide necessities the family would otherwise lack. Moreover, many migrant youth start families of their own as adolescents, a condition providing a further incentive to leave school early. The lack of adequate childcare services can also keep such students from returning to school.

Interrupted school attendance and lack of continuity in curriculum are additional conditions raising the dropout rate for migrant students. These conditions often prevent migrant students from accruing the course credits they otherwise would. Although students in the U.S. are highly mobile (and this is generally detrimental to student achievement), the issue of student mobility has not received much attention from educational researchers, practitioners, or policy makers (Rumberger, Larson, Palardy,

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Ream & Schleicher, 1998). This study investigated the impact of student mobility on one specific educational consequence: Completing high school.

Consequences of Dropping Out

The consequences of dropping out of high school affect both the non-completer and society in general. The economic and social costs of the Hispanic dropout problem are escalating for many reasons: 1) the Hispanic population is rapidly growing, in both absolute numbers and as a proportion of U.S. students; 2) fewer dropouts will find employment; 3) upgraded workforce skills are critical for an individual's and the nation's successes in the global economy; 4) people need increasingly more advanced knowledge and skills to participate in this society, to vote intelligently, and to make intelligent consumer decisions; 5) labor force productivity and income must expand to help meet the needs of senior citizens as they continue to make up a larger segment of our population; and 6) children of the future will be strongly affected by their parents' income and education levels (GAO, 1996).

Current employment needs do not tolerate dropout rates that have not changed over the last 40 years. The consequences of dropping out include the following: a) limited employment opportunities because today's workforce requires increased literacy, more education, enhanced technological skills, and lifelong learning; b) higher rates of high-risk behaviors such as premature sexual activity, early pregnancy, delinquency, crime, violence, alcohol and drug abuse, and suicide (School Dropouts: The Extent and Nature of the Problem, 1987); c) lifelong dependency on welfare and other social programs; d) widening income differences between dropouts and other citizens as the economy evolves, pitting Americans with less education against computerized machines and

people in low-wage nations; and, e) growth of unskilled laborers in low-wage jobs, increasing the trend toward developing a large American underclass which "some analysts argue…threatens the continuing existence of a democratic way of life" (Asche, 1993, p. 13).

Efforts to Reduce the Dropout Rate

There is no quick fix to the dropout problem for migrant and Hispanic youth. The problem is complex and requires a vast array of solutions. Although the group is defined here as migrant and Hispanic based upon similar characteristics, dissimilar characteristics exist. Some examples include length of time individual students have been in the U.S. and level of proficiency in English. Thus, intervention programs need to be developed with flexibility to respond to the individual needs and circumstances of students.

Effective programs provide intense one-on-one attention to students who must be convinced they are competent and can be successful in school. The curriculum should include basic educational skills, social skills, and experiential education. Additionally, the interrelated causes and multiple problems associated with dropping out call for comprehensive, community wide, multi-service approaches and multi-component programs (Wood et al., 1993).

Not all factors related to dropout reduction are within the school's control. Thus, schools alone cannot achieve solutions. Dropout prevention requires a team approach, including the combined efforts of students, parents, teachers, administrators, community-based organizations and businesses, as well as federal, state and local governments (Wood et al., 1993).

Migrant Education Programs

In an attempt to counter the discontinuity of education stemming from the migrant way of life, the U.S. Congress established the National Migrant Education Program (MEP) authorized as Title 1 of Part C, Subpart 1 of Chapter 1 of Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). Initially, the MEP made funds available for supplemental instruction and support services in health and nutrition for the school-aged children and youth (ages 5-18) of migratory agricultural workers. In later years, the program extended services to the children of migrant fishers and loggers.

More recent changes to the program under the Augustus F. Hawkins – Robert T. Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1988 (P.L. 100-297) expanded the age range of eligible students to three through 21. This change recognized the importance of early childhood programs and the need for continued services beyond the typical age of high school graduation for these educationally-disadvantaged youth.

Underlying Beliefs of the MEP

The MEP is based on the premise that poverty, mobility, and school achievement are related and that children who are both poor and migratory are more likely to have difficulty in school. Consequently, many need extra help in compensating for the effects that a mobile family lifestyle has on learning. Just as migrants' lives are itinerant, so becomes their education. Low achievement rates and high dropout rates have plagued migrant students for over 40 years, which indicates the problem is both complex and pervasive. Generating alternative educational programs for migrant students is both time-consuming and complex. Intervention programs can be strictly academic in nature or

more comprehensive, including counseling and sociocultural components to address the unique needs of migrant students.

Exemplary Technological Interventions for Migrant Students

Overall, 15% of American high schools offer online courses and at least 26 states have virtual high schools (Borja, 2001) with a number of technological interventions designed to address the unique needs of migrant Hispanic youth. This section highlights the Portable Assisted Study Sequence (PASS), Project SMART (Summer Migrants Access Resources through Technology), and Algebra Across the Wire (AAW) as examples of technological interventions for migrant Hispanic youth.

Since 1978, the nationwide PASS program for migratory secondary students (funded through the MEP) has provided portable units of study so migrant students in 31 states can receive credit towards graduation. The PASS Program: a) supplements the regular instruction for migrant students at secondary level; (b) provides opportunities for migrant students to develop higher order thinking skills and to become lifelong learners; and, (c) creates opportunities for students to learn to do research, access knowledge, and develop critical thinking skills. Currently, the PASS Program offers 36 core and elective courses in both Spanish and English. These course offerings are currently aligned with Texas state guidelines, but efforts are underway to correlate these courses with multiple state performance standards (Huynh, personal communication, February 13, 2000).

In an effort to bring the PASS Program into the era of technology, Project SMART was designed. Project SMART originated in Texas and was designed to meet instructional needs of migrant students regardless of summer travel patterns or living arrangements. Blending television technology and innovative instructional design, Project

SMART targets two groups of students. First, migrant students remaining in their home states during the summer are taught in their homes (or, if needed, at other sites such as community centers, libraries, or schools) via television instruction if a comparable summer school program is not available. Second, migrant students living temporarily out-of-state and participating in established migrant summer educational programs might receive instruction via Project SMART (Yanez, 1996). The goals of Project SMART are to: 1) provide quality instruction and support to migrant students remaining in Texas who are not currently being served in summer programs because of working patterns, lack of availability, or distance; 2) provide continuity of instruction for migrant students who move from state to state; 3) improve performance on the math, reading, and writing sections of the state assessments; 4) offer credit courses for high school students; and, 5) promote the involvement of parents in their children's education (Castro & Nichols, 1996).

Another promising program originated at the University of Texas at Austin. Six high school classes are offered through audio conferencing, a two-way voice communication between two or more groups of three or more individuals in separate locations. The classes include Health Science Technology Education, TeleLanguage (Spanish and German), TeleRap (a roundtable discussion for teenagers), and a special migrant student program called Algebra Across the Wire (AAW). All courses are approved by the Texas Education Agency, count toward graduation, and fulfill Texas essential elements, which are comparable to Virginia's Standards of Learning (Hardy, 1996).

Migrant students often withdraw from school, attend classes in various states, and then return to their original schools. Unfortunately, this often results in partial credits that do not count toward graduation. Therefore, programs like AAW are important because they offer an alternative credit option to secondary migrant students as they travel or attend summer school.

Five sections of AAW are offered each summer with a maximum of 20 students per section. To date, most sections have had between 10 and 15 students. The course runs four to eight weeks depending upon how many hours students spend in class per day.

What are the Special Needs of Migrant Secondary Students?

The needs of migrant secondary school students are as varied as the students themselves. However, some assessment of need is necessary in order to design effective intervention programs. Affective, cognitive, and technical needs should be assessed and addressed when planning intervention and prevention programs for migrant youth.

Affective needs are perceived by migrant school staff to be at the root of many students' cognitive failures. Repeated experiences of frustration and failure, and lack of acceptance due to mobility, produce low self-concept, feelings of isolation, and reduced motivation (Rasmussen, 1988).

Cognitive needs are specific, practical needs for academic success. They include: Remedial assistance in math, reading, ESL; study skills development; time management; and, academic and vocational guidance.

Technical needs include problems students encounter with school systems and which affect them individually, but over which they have no control: inappropriate age/grade placement (the highest predictor of dropout behavior, with a 99% dropout rate

for students more than one year overage); credit deficiencies due to frequent moves and no means for earning partial credits; and inadequate knowledge of graduation requirements which vary from district to district (Rasmussen, 1988).

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Study

This study analyzed data on current 18 and 19-year-old Virginia Migrant Education Program Hispanic students to identify common factors among students who earned a high school diploma as compared with those who did not. Data reviewed included contextual and school-related factors such as: Student age, gender, home language, number of schools attended, rate of attendance, participation in educational programs, grade promotion/retention, graduation status, and family structure.

Research Questions

This study was based upon the following overarching questions:

1. What common school-related factors exist among Hispanic Migrant Education Program students who earned a high school diploma in Virginia?

2. What common contextual factors (as defined in Chapter 1) exist among Hispanic Migrant Education Program students who earned a high school diploma in Virginia?

3. What common school-related factors (as defined in Chapter 1) exist among Hispanic Migrant Education Program students who did not earn a high school diploma in Virginia?

4. What common contextual factors exist among Hispanic Migrant Education Program students who did not earn a high school diploma in Virginia?

Methodology

This descriptive study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods to facilitate the systematic study of specific features of information (Berg, 2001; Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1999; Weber, 1990), which documented the participants' educational experiences. What follows is a description of the population, the content reviewed, and the procedures followed.

Population and Sample

The population was all 18 and 19-year-olds enrolled in the Virginia Migrant Education Program as of June 30, 2000. This group consisted of 50 students; 27 eighteen-year-olds, 25 males and two females; and, 23 nineteen-year olds, 21 males and two females. All student records were accessible; therefore, it was not necessary to use sampling techniques.

Records from all 50 high school students enrolled in the Virginia Migrant Education Program as of June, 2000, were reviewed which constituted a statistically adequate sample (Borg & Gall, 1989; Gay, 1996; Gall, Borg & Gall, 1999).

Content for Review

The content included student records from the Virginia Regional Migrant Education Program Center, and records from the students' individual school. Student records housed in Virginia's Regional Migrant Education Program Center included the student's Certificate of Migrant Education Program Eligibility. This document lists the student's name, age, gender, and the names and ages of family members. Also available through the Migrant Education Program were "Take Along Folders" which not only contained current grades and recent samples of the student work, but also a log of written

comments from the student's former teacher(s). This special record was developed by the Virginia Department of Education in 1993 as an effort to engage teachers across schools, divisions, states, and countries in a continuous dialogue about student progress. School staffs heavily rely upon these "Take Along Folders" because they arrive with the student and oftentimes prior to "official" transcripts from the student's previous school (Wrigley, personal communication, October 26, 2000). Teachers are anxious to know where to begin instruction and about the student's strengths and weaknesses. Thus, principals and teachers make initial classroom placement decisions using this folder of information and then confirm these placements once the student's transcript arrives from his/her previous school, which can take between two and three weeks (Pitcock, personal communication, January 16, 2001).

Procedures for Compiling Qualitative Data

Step One. Reviewed student "Take Along Folders" for descriptive statements, which were categorized within three themes: Poverty, mobility, and second language learning.

Step Two. Contacted Migrant Education Program or school building level administrators for elaboration, clarification, or verification of student information, as was necessary.

Step Three. Recorded statements which did not fit into one of the three categories.

Step Four. Looked for emergent themes or categories among the statements, which did not fit the three predetermined themes.

Step Five. Used thematic analysis techniques to analyze student statements and identify relationships between common student experiences and whether or not a student completed high school or obtained a GED.

Procedures for Compiling Quantitative Data

Step One. Reviewed Certificates of Eligibility and school records for each student.

Step Two. Compiled an electronic database of information for each student which included both contextual and school-related factors.

Step Three. Contacted Migrant Education Program or school building level administrators for elaboration, clarification, or verification of student information, as was necessary.

Step Four. Queried student database for statistical relationships between school-related and contextual factors and whether or not a student completed high school or obtained a GED.

Data Analysis

This study employed both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Quantitative analysis reveals information best represented in numerical, statistical form (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1996; Weber 1990). Quantitative data was analyzed using the Chi Square nonparametric test, which is appropriate when data includes frequency counts occurring in two or more mutually exclusive categories (Gay, 1996).

Several characteristics of this study dictated a mix of both qualitative and quantitative analyses to be the most appropriate methodology. The data analyzed contained a collection of diverse documents gathered from various school divisions and

states. Some documents include quantitative data while others contained narrative information.

Qualitative analysis included organizing narratives from student "Take Along Folders" within the themes of poverty, mobility, and second language learning as well as through themes, which emerged through the course of data collection and analysis.

As a discipline that searches for a "coherent patterning of empirical data that is part of the larger social reality theoretically derived from the data" (Fiske, 1994, p 195), thematic analysis offered a sound technique for attempting to identify patterns in the little-explored educational experiences of migrant students. Since this study sought to understand what educational experiences yielded successful high school completion for migrant students, both straight counting of who graduated and in-depth review of student records which detail the educational career of the student were necessary.

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is appropriate when documents include narrative descriptions other than interviews, questionnaires, and observations (Anderson, 1998; U. S. General Accounting Office, 1996). A particular advantage of the technique, according to Budd, Thorp, and Donohew (1967) is the opportunity to analyze the communication without biasing the communicator, which can be a problem in other forms of communication monitoring. Recent dissertations approaching document data through qualitative analysis included Gareis' study of mission statements in the public schools of Virginia (1996) and Arkins' study of state legislation regarding educator assault (1999).

Different authorities (Frey, Botan, Friedman, & Kreps, 1992; Krippendorff, 1980; U. S. General Accounting Office, 1996; Weber, 1990) suggest various – yet similar -

plans for approaching thematic analysis. The U.S. Government (U. S. General Accounting Office, 1996) advised the use of four steps: Defining the variables/categories of comparison, selecting the information for analysis, defining the themes, and developing the plan for analysis. Krippendorff (1980), using slightly different terminology, offered much the same plan, adding inferring as a step. All emphasize the importance of attending to issues of reliability and validity. Synthesizing the recommendations of the aforementioned authorities, this study followed these steps to complete the thematic analysis of Migrant Education Program student "Take Along Folders":

1. Planning for data collection (as described above)

Coding: identification of the themes based upon a review of the literature (in this study poverty, mobility, and second language learning)

Coding: definition of the coding units (in this study, school-related and contextual factors which influence migrant student achievement)

Creation of protocols for managing data, including emergent features

Identification of strategies to ensure validity and reliability

Analysis of data

The content of these "Take Along Folders" was analyzed within the themes of poverty, mobility and second language learning. These factors were well documented in the literature as factors contributing to the high dropout rate among migrant Hispanic students. The researcher did not expect all narrative information contained in the "Take Along Folders" would be categorized within these three themes. Rather, she anticipated other themes would emerge through the data collection and analysis process.

The following information describes the techniques, which fulfilled the steps outlined above. Step 1, as indicated, was described previously in this chapter. In part, step 4 has also been addressed, as referenced below.

Steps 2 and 3: Coding. Berelson (1971, p. 147) stated "analysis stands or falls by its categories." Categories (defined in this study as school-related and contextual factors) must reflect the investigator's research questions and be exhaustive, mutually exclusive, independent, and based in a single classification principle (Gerbner, Holsti, Krippendorff, Paisley & Stone, 1969). Specifically, categories are specifically bounded compartments into which information is grouped for analysis (Budd, Thorp, & Donohew, 1967). Into these categories the researcher placed code units, which were the smallest bits of information.

Step 2: Coding: Determination of the coding unit. According to various authors, coding units can be such elements as a word, theme, assertion, paragraph, item, character, group, object, institution, space, or time (Budd et. al., 1967; Weber, 1990). In this study, the coding units were *common educational experiences,* as identified in the student data collection pages (Bogdon & Biklen, 1992).

Step 3: Coding: definition of the categories. The four distinct research questions indicated the same requirement for category strategies. All four questions addressed the content of the migrant student's educational experiences; however, questions one and three addressed school-related factors while two and four addressed contextual-related factors.

Questions One and Three ask what common school-related factors exist among Hispanic Migrant Education Program students who earned or did not earn high school

diplomas in Virginia. Information in this study was organized in the summary of student findings for contextual factors in order for the researcher to discern which common school-related factors occurred with students who earned a high school diploma.

Questions Two and Four ask what common contextual (i.e. family, language, work) factors exist among Hispanic Migrant Education Program students who earned or did not earn high school diplomas in Virginia. Information in this study was organized in the summary of student findings for contextual factors in order for the researcher to discern which common contextual factors occurred with students who did and did not earn a high school diploma.

Step 4: Protocols for managing data, including emergent features. The categories for managing data appear in the summary of student findings for both contextual and school-related factors. In addition, a logbook, as recommended by Riffe, Lacy, & Fico (1998) and the U.S. General Accounting Office (1996), includes the following:

- A record of contacts made to each regional Migrant Education Program office; and,
- Notes taken from individual student records (hard copy) detailing any pertinent information, which cannot be categorized in the summary of student findings.

Step 5: Identification of strategies to ensure validity and reliability. Weber (1990) recommended measures for ensuring reliability in thematic analysis, to include stability, reproducibility, and accuracy. The definition of stability, which appears to apply to this study, is that of document length: The longer the document, the less

stability. Since the student records vary in length and complexity, the researcher was cautious to decode the documents in small chunks, as uniformly as possible.

Another of Weber's forms of reliability is reproducibility, evidenced in this study through inter-rater reliability. Only one researcher handled this data, so reproducibility was approached through test coding, described below.

Accuracy, Weber's strongest form of reliability, depends on the standardization of categories. Since a study of this nature had not yet been conducted in Virginia, the researcher chose to review school division and Migrant Education Program records in an attempt to ensure credence, combat bias, and support accuracy.

As with accuracy, both construct and content validity were addressed by the use of the pre-determined categories. Heeding Krippendorff (1980) and Weber's (1990) advice, establishing these categories (common factors in this study) provided a venue for post-study reflection on the match between the analysis and the categories.

Step 6: Analysis of data. Categorization of this information resulted in descriptive data reported in such forms as frequency counts and means and analyzed using the Chi square test. In addition, inferences were drawn from the coding and recombining of data after the data have been categorized and presented in narrative form. All four research questions were answered based upon the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. The following table presents an overview of the data analysis:

Type of Data	Data Sources	Data Analysis
Qualitative	Student "Take Along Folders"	Thematic analysis used predetermined (poverty, mobility and second language learning) and emergent themes
Quantitative	Certificates of Eligibility Migrant Education Program and specific school records for each student	• Summary of student findings for both contextual and school-related factors reported as frequencies and percentages. • Chi-Square

Ethical Safeguards and Considerations

Individual student records remained confidential. Students were assigned a case number between one and 50 to protect their identities during the course of the study. However, identification of specific Migrant Education Program offices to contact for future information became part of the dissertation record.

The discrete and isolated nature of the analysis minimized bias on the part of the providers of the documents and on the interpretations of the researcher. Additionally, the study involved no interventions, treatments, or manipulations of participants. Finally, the Human Subjects Committee of The School of Education at The College of William and Mary reviewed and approved this study.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Introduction

The intent of this study was to analyze data on current 18 and 19-year-old Virginia Migrant Education Program Hispanic students to identify common factors among students who earned a high school diploma as compared with those who did not. Data reviewed included the students' age, gender, home language, number of schools attended, rate of attendance, participation in educational programs, grade promotion/retention, graduation status, and family structure. The following research questions drove this study:

1. What common school-related factors exist among Hispanic Migrant Education Program students who earned a high school diploma in Virginia?

2. What common contextual (i.e. family, language, work) factors exist among Hispanic Migrant Education Program students who earned a high school diploma in Virginia?

3. What common school-related factors exist among Hispanic Migrant Education Program students who did not earn a high school diploma in Virginia?

4. What common contextual (i.e. family, language, work) factors exist among Hispanic Migrant Education Program students who did not earn a high school diploma in Virginia?

Given these questions, the research methodology of content analysis was undertaken, and a data collection strategy was employed. The results are presented herein.

Characteristics of the Sample

Since this study sought to understand which educational experiences yielded successful high school completion for migrant students, straight counting of who graduated (N = 11) and who did not graduate (N = 39) and the characteristics of each group was necessary. The total group of 50 included all Virginia Migrant Education Program students who were 18 or 19 as of June 30, 2000. Please refer to Appendices A and B for individual student data and to Tables 1 and 2 for summaries of these data based upon frequency counts and percentages.

Table 1 shows almost 64% (7 of 11) of the completers were 19 years old upon graduation. Almost 49% (19 of 39) of the non-completers were 19 years old when they dropped out. This means a total of 52% (26 of 50) of the students in this study were not on grade level. Being below grade level is considered to be a drop out risk factor, especially for migrant students (Shulman, 2001). The percentage of students in this study (52%) who were not on grade level is slightly higher than national data from the Migrant Student Record Transfer System, which shows 50% of migrant students in grades 9-12 on grade level.

Table 1. Summary of Student Age

Common	Graduates		Non-Graduates	
Contextual Factors	**Frequency**	**Percentage of Total**	**Frequency**	**Percentage of Total**
Age 19	7	14%	19	38%
Age 18	4	8%	20	40%
Totals	11	22%	39	78%

Table 2 shows the gender of the completers in this study was nearly evenly split with 55% (6 of 11) males and 45% (5 of 11) females. This is particularly interesting

considering the gender of the sample was 80% (40 of 50) male and 20% (10 of 50) female. The total number of male graduates was higher than that for females; however, the females graduated at a higher rate across the sample with 15% (6 of 40) of males graduating and 50% (5 of 10) of females graduating.

Table 2. Summary of Student Gender

Common	Graduates		Non-Graduates	
Contextual Factors	**Frequency**	**Percentage of Total**	**Frequency**	**Percentage of Total**
Male	6	12%	34	68%
Female	5	10%	5	10%
Totals	11	22%	39	78%

Common School-related Factors among
Virginia Migrant Education Program Students

Research Questions 1 and 3

Research Question 1:
What common school-related factors exist among Hispanic Migrant Education Program students who earned a high school diploma in Virginia?

Research Question 3:
What common school-related factors exist among Hispanic Migrant Education Program students who did not earn a high school diploma in Virginia?

These research questions were answered using data gathered from the students' school records and their individual Certificates of Eligibility for the Virginia Migrant Education Program. During the course of data collection, checks and verifications from independent sources, such as Migrant Education Program personnel, validated the accuracy of the data to be examined.

Once the school-related data were entered into the database and examined, it was discovered that 11 of the 50 students in this study completed their high school program. Of these 11, eight graduated (one in Mexico) and three earned a GED. The graduation

rate for students in this study is 22% and considerably lower than the national average graduation rate for Migrant high school students which ranges from 35% - 55% in three studies (Levy, 1987; Vamos, 1992; Latinos in Education, 1999).

Of those completing high school, 91.0% (10 of 11) did not receive special education services and were not retained at any grade level in their school career. The common factor with the next highest percentage for completers is school attendance in two countries and participation in ESL instruction. Seventy-two percent (8 of 11) of students attended schools in both the U.S. and Mexico and received ESL instruction. Also, 63.7% of students attended school in only one state. Data for the other common factors range from 9 - 36.4 percent. Straight frequency counts and the equivalent percentages for all school-related factors, both for completers and non-completers, are included in Tables 3 - 13.

Seventy-eight percent (39 of 50) of students in this study did not complete high school. This is a higher percentage than the national dropout rate for migrant high school students, which ranged from 45% to 65% in three studies (Levy, 1987; Vamos, 1992; Latinos in Education, 1999).

Of the non-completers, 94.9% (37 of 39) of the students did not receive special education services. The next highest percentage, 92.3% (36 of 39), received English as a Second Language instruction. Sixty-nine percent of these students received ESL instruction outside of school in evening adult classes at their migrant camps. Eighty-seven percent (34 of 39) of the students were not retained during their school careers. Interestingly, 28 (71.8%) students attended school only in Mexico. These 28 men never enrolled in a U.S. school once they arrived from Mexico. The researcher did not

anticipate this circumstance; however, it does reflect a current trend in Migrant Education Program enrollment according to Patience Jones, Migrant Education Program Coordinator at the Virginia Department of Education (Jones, 2001). Therefore, the researcher chose to analyze all data to determine the effects of the variables on the population. Percentages for the other school-related factors ranged from 9-38.5 and are included in Tables 3 – 13.

As seen in Table 3, the largest percent of student completers attended four schools. Frequent relocation is associated with lower academic performance (GAO, 1994; MPR, 1992); however, "frequent relocation" is not clearly defined in the literature. Certainly attending four schools should be considered more frequent than traditional students who usually attend three schools: Elementary, middle, and, high.

Interestingly, Table 3 also shows the largest percent of non-completers attending just two schools. If frequent migration is associated with lower academic performance (GAO, 1994; MPR, 1992), why did the non-completers in this study move less frequently than the completers?

Table 3. Number of K-12 Schools Attended

Common School-Related Factor	Graduates		Non-Graduates		Row Totals	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Attended 2 schools	2	8.7%	21	91.3%	23	100.0%
Attended 3 schools	3	16.7%	15	83.3%	18	100.0%
Attended 4 schools	4	57.1%	3	42.9%	7	100.0%
Attended 5 schools	2	100.0%	0	0.0%	2	100.0%
Column Totals	11	22.0%	39	78.0%	50	100.0%

Note: Percent totals are calculated across the rows to correspond with Chi Square analysis.

Further investigation into the non-completer student records found one possible explanation. All 21 non-completers who reported attending two schools were males who attended elementary (grades 1-8) and high school (grades 9-12) in Mexico. They stayed

in Mexico until they dropped out to travel to the U.S. for work. While in the U.S., these 21 students continued their education only through after-school and evening programs. Thus, it seems one big move to the United States, rather than many minor moves affected graduation.

The Migrant Education Program was not successful in enrolling these youth in school, but was able to provide ESL classes in their camps at night. In order to receive this service, the Migrant Education program requires a Certificate of Eligibility document to be completed by each participant. This document is why these 21 men were included in this study. The sample was chosen by including all Virginia Migrant Education Program Certificates of Eligibility for any program participant who was 18 or 19 years old as of June 30, 2000.

Table 4 shows p = .036, which is below .05 and means the number of schools attended by students (independent variable) had an observable effect on the dependent variable (graduation).

Table 4. Chi-Square Analysis of K-12 Schools Attended

Independent Variable: Number of schools attended	Graduates	Non-Graduates	Row Totals
Student attended two schools	2 8.7%	21 91.3%	23 100.0%
Student attended three or more schools	9 33.3%	18 66.7%	27 100.0%
Column Totals	11 22.0%	39 78.0%	50 100.0%

N = 50 Chi-Square 4.393 (df =1) p = .036

The most obvious finding shown in Table 5 is that students who did not attend any schools in the U.S. did not graduate. Table 5 also shows most student completers attended school in one state. According to Appendix A, that state was Virginia. Table 5

also shows four student completers attended school in more than one state and Appendix A shows these additional states to be North Carolina and Georgia.

Table 5 shows 28 non-completers did not attend school in any U.S. state. This group was included in this study because they received English as a Second Language instruction through the Migrant Education Program at the migrant camps in the evenings. These young men were not enrolled in school because they were working in the fields during the day.

Table 5. Number of States in which Students Attended School

Common School-Related Factor	Graduates		Non-Graduates		Row Totals	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Did not attend school in U.S.	0	0.0%	28	100.0%	*28	*100.0%
Attended school in 1 state	7	50.0%	7	50.0%	14	100.0%
Attended school in 2 states	3	42.9%	4	57.1%	7	100.0%
Attended school in 3 states	1	100.0%	0	0%	1	100.0%
Column Totals	11	22.0%	39	78.0%	50	100.0%

Note: Percent totals are calculated across the rows to correspond with Chi Square analysis.
* These participants received ESL instruction in the evening at the migrant camps and therefore were not enrolled in school.

Table 6 shows the largest percent of completers attended schools in both the US and Mexico. It is important to note that no students who attended school solely in Mexico graduated; however, one of the student completers who attended school in both the U.S. and Mexico actually graduated in Mexico (Appendix A).

Table 6. Countries in which Students Attended School

Common School-Related / Contextual Factors	Graduates		Non-Graduates		Row Totals	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Attended school in U.S. only	1	33.3%	2	66.7%	3	100.0%
Attended school in MX only	0	0.0%	28	100.0%	*28	*100.0%
Attended in U.S. & MX	10	52.6%	9	47.4%	19	100.0%
Column Totals	11	22.0%	39	78.0%	50	100.0%

Note: Percent totals are calculated across the rows to correspond with Chi Square analysis.
* These participants received ESL instruction in the evening at the migrant camps and therefore were not enrolled in school.

Table 7 shows p = .000 which is less than .05 and means the number of countries in which students attended school (independent variable) had an observable effect on the dependent variable (graduation). The most obvious effect was that students who only attended school in Mexico did not graduate.

Table 7. Chi-Square Analysis of Countries in which Students Attended School

Independent Variable: Number of Countries in which students attended school	Graduates	Non-Graduates	Row Totals
Student attended schools only in Mexico	0 0.0%	28 100.0%	28 100.0%
Student attended schools in the U.S. (either in the U.S. Only or in the U.S. and Mexico)	11 50%	11 50%	22 100.0%
Column Totals	11 22.0%	39 78.0%	50 100.0%

N = 50 Chi-Square 17.949 (df = 1) p = .000

Table 8 shows 47 students did not receive special education services; however, these data do not indicate whether students were referred for special education services.

Table 8. Number of Students Receiving Special Education (SPED) Services

Common School-Related Factors	Graduates		Non-Graduates		Row Totals	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Participated in SPED	1	33.3%	2	66.7%	3	100.0%
Did not participate in SPED	10	21.3%	37	78.7%	47	100.0%
Column Totals	11	22.0%	39	78.0%	50	100.0%

Note: Percent totals are calculated across the rows to correspond with Chi Square analysis.

Table 9 shows p = .625 which means the independent variable (special education services) had no observable effect on the dependent variable (graduation).

Table 9. Chi-Square Analysis of Students Receiving Special Education Services

Independent Variable: Special Education Services	Graduates	Non-Graduates	Row Totals
Participated in Special Education	1 33.3%	2 66.7%	3 100.0%
Did not participate in Special Education	10 21.3%	37 78.7%	47 100.0%
Column Totals	11 22.0%	39 78.0%	50 100.0%

N = 50 Chi-Square .239 (df = 1) p = .625

Table 10 shows 44 students in this study received English as a Second Language instruction with 36 not completing high school. Remember 28 of the 36 non-completers were not enrolled in school, but received ESL instruction in the migrant camps at night. If we subtract these 28 from the 36 non-completers who received ESL instruction, 8 of the 50 students who were enrolled in school and received ESL instruction did not graduate and Table 10 shows this is the same number of completers who were enrolled in school, received ESL instruction and graduated.

Table 10. Number of Students Receiving English as a Second Language Instruction

Common School-	**Graduates**		**Non-Graduates**		**Row Totals**	
Related Factors	**Frequency**	**Percentage**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Received ESL	8	18.2%	36	81.8%	44	100.0%
Did not receive ESL	3	50.0%	3	50.0%	6	100.0%
Totals	11	22.0%	39	78.0%	50	100.0%

Note: Percent totals are calculated across the rows to correspond with Chi Square analysis.

Table 11 shows p = .078 which is greater than .05 and means the independent variable (ESL instruction) had no observable effect on the dependent variable (graduation).

Table 11. Chi-Square Analysis of Students Receiving ESL Instruction

Independent Variable: ESL Instruction	Graduates	Non-Graduates	Row Totals
Received ESL Instruction	8 18.2%	36 81.8%	44 100.0%
Did not receive ESL Instruction	3 50.0%	3 50.0%	6 100.0%
Column Totals	11 22.0%	39 78.0%	50 100.0%

N = 50 Chi-Square 3.115 (df = 1) p = .078

Table 12 shows only 6 students in this study were retained during their school careers. Appendix A shows at which grade level each of these students was retained.

Table 12. Number of Students Retained

Common School-Related Factors	Graduates		Non-Graduates		Row Totals	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Retained	1	16.7%	5	83.3%	6	100.0%
Not retained	10	22.7%	34	77.3%	44	100.0%
Totals	11	22.0%	39	78.0%	50	100.0%

Note: Percent totals are calculated across the rows to correspond with Chi Square analysis.

Table 13 shows p = .737 which is greater than .05 and means the independent variable (student retention) had no observable effect on the dependent variable (graduation).

Table 13. Chi-Square Analysis of Student Retentions

Independent Variable: Retention	Graduates	Non-Graduates	Row Totals
Retained	1 16.7%	5 83.3%	6 100.0%
Not retained	10 22.7%	34 77.3%	44 100.0%
Column Totals	11 22.0%	39 78.0%	50 100.0%

N = 50 Chi-Square .113 (df = 1) p = .737

Common Contextual Factors among Virginia Migrant Education Program Students

Research Questions 2 and 4

Research Question 2:
What common contextual (i.e. family, language, work) factors exist among Hispanic Migrant Education Program students who earned a high school diploma in Virginia?

Research Question 4:
What common contextual (i.e. family, language, work) factors exist among Hispanic Migrant Education Program students who did not earn a high school diploma in Virginia?

These research questions were answered using data gathered from the students' school records and their individual Certificates of Eligibility for the Virginia Migrant Education Program. During the course of data collection, checks and verifications from

independent sources, such as Migrant Education Program personnel, validated the accuracy of the data to be examined.

Once the school-related data were entered into the database and examined, it was discovered that most students in this study lived without their parents and extended family in the home. Straight frequency counts and the equivalent percentages for all contextual factors, both for completers and non-completers, are included in Tables 14 through 19.

Table 14 shows 31 students in this study lived on their own with 30 of these students not completing high school. Almost 9 completers lived with both parents in the home.

Table 14. Student Immediate Family Structure

Common	Graduates		Non-Graduates		Row Totals	
Contextual Factor	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Student lives with parents	9	52.9%	8	47.1%	17	100.0%
Students lives with mother	1	50.0%	1	50.0%	2	100.0%
Student lives with father	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Student lives on own	1	3.2%	30	96.8%	31	100.0%
Totals	11	22.0%	39	78.0%	50	100.0%

Note: Percent totals are calculated across the rows to correspond with Chi Square analysis.

Table 15 shows p = .001, which is less than .05 and means the independent variable (immediate family structure) had an observable effect on the dependent variable (graduation).

Table 15. Chi-Square Analysis of Immediate Family Structure

Independent Variable: Immediate Family Structure	Graduates	Non-Graduates	Row Totals
Student lives with mother and father; mother or father	9 47.4%	10 52.6%	19 100.0%
Student does not live with mother or father	2 6.5%	29 93.5%	31 100.0%
Column Totals	11 22.0%	39 78.0%	50 100.0%

N = 50 Chi-Square 11.493 (df = 1) p = .001

One of the most obvious findings these data indicate is that none of the students in this study who did not graduate lived with extended family in the home. However, very few students lived with extended family. Table 16 shows only 2 of the 50 students in this study lived with extended family. According to a review of migrant student records for the two students who reported living with extended family, these family members included grandmothers, grandfathers, aunts, and uncles.

Table 16. Student Extended Family Structure

Common	Graduates		Non-Graduates		Row Totals	
Contextual Factor	**Frequency**	**Percentage**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Student lives with extended family	2	100.0%	0	0.0%	2	100.0%
Student lives with no extended family	9	18.8%	39	81.2%	48	100.0%
Column Totals	11	22.0%	39	78.0%	50	100.0%

Note: Percent totals are calculated across the rows to correspond with Chi Square analysis.

Table 17 shows p = .007, which is greater than .05 and means the independent variable (extended family structure) had an observable effect on the dependent variable (graduation). Remember, however, that only 2 of the 50 students in this study lived with extended family in the home.

Table 17. Chi-Square Analysis of Student Extended Family Structure

Independent Variable: Extended Family Structure	Graduates	Non-Graduates	Row Totals
Student lives with extended family	2 100.0%	0 0.0%	2 100.0%
Student lives with no extended family	9 18.8%	39 81.2%	48 100.0%
Column Totals	11 22.0%	39 78.0%	50 100.0%

N = 50 Chi-Square 7.386 (df = 1) p = .007

Table 18 shows the availability of data for 22 students concerning the number of siblings in the students' homes. The reason for this discrepancy is that 28 students who

reported living on their own also reported only having one sibling in the home (themselves) so the data do not reflect the actual number of siblings in the families of these young men. Based upon the available data, there is no specific pattern regarding the number of siblings.

Table 18. Number of Student Siblings

Common	Graduates		Non-Graduates		Row Totals	
Contextual Factor	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Student is only child	1	100.0%	Data not	available	1	100.0%
Students has one sibling	4	57.1%	3	42.9%	7	100.0%
Student has two siblings	0	0.0%	3	100.0%	3	100.0%
Student has three siblings	3	50.0%	3	50.0%	6	100.0%
Student has four siblings	2	66.7%	1	33.3%	3	100.0%
Student has six siblings	1	50.0%	1	50.0%	2	100.0%
Totals	11	50.0%	11	50.0%	22	100.0%

Note: Percent totals are calculated across the rows to correspond with Chi Square analysis and data for 28 non-completers was not obtained uniformly and so was not included.

Table 19 shows most students as the first child in the family with the same percentage of student completers reporting holding the first and second position in the family. Table 19 also reflects the same data discrepancy as in Table 18. The 28 students who reported having only one sibling (themselves) also did not report data concerning their positions in the family.

Table 19. Student Position in Family

Common	Graduates		Non-Graduates		Row Totals	
Contextual Factor	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Student is first in family	5	45.5%	6	54.5%	11	100.0%
Student is second in family	5	62.5%	3	37.5%	8	100.0%
Student is third in family	1	100.0%	0	0.0%	1	100.0%
Student is fourth in family	0	0.0%	2	100.0%	2	100.0%
Totals	11	50.0%	11	50.0%	22	100.0%

Note: Percent totals are calculated across the rows to correspond with Chi Square analysis and data for 28 non-completers was not obtained uniformly and so was not included.

Summary of Qualitative Data

The qualitative analysis used in this study allowed the researcher to interpret

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

written statements made by students and examine similarities and differences among their comments. Given the high interrelatedness of the information, all research questions were addressed simultaneously for each category of analysis to present a logical flow of information and conclusions. Four categories were examined: Poverty, mobility, second language learning, and isolation.

The statements were sub categorized in two ways. First, the statements were categorized based on whether they fell into one of the pre determined categories of poverty, mobility, and second language learning. Second, the statements were categorized based on frequency allowing the researcher to look for emergent themes. As a result, the category of isolation emerged as often as the pre determined categories.

Analysis of Student Statements

Appendix C indicates the results of the first sub category--whether the statements included references to poverty, mobility, and second language learning. Out of 50 student essays, 15 included references to poverty, mobility, and second language learning. Five other essays included statements about isolation. Thus, 40% of students addressed at least one of these issues in their writing. Table 20 shows the breakdown of how many student essays were read and how many contained statements in pre determined or emergent categories.

Table 20. Summary of Student Essays

Student Group	Number of Essays Read	Number Containing Statements in Pre Determined or Emergent Categories	Percent of Participants Containing Statements in Pre Determined or Emergent Categories
Graduates	11	5	45.5%
Non-Graduates	39	15	38.5%
Totals	50	20	40.0%

Clustering technique for students' statements. The second sub category of analysis required the use of clustering to group similar wordings under a broader heading, necessary because of the unique and highly individual wording of each student statement (Holsti, 1969; Krippendorf, 1980). The results of the clustering technique for the student statements are summarized in Table 21.

Table 21. Summary of Specific Student Statements According to Number of Times Included in Written Essays.

Type of Statement	Sentences including this topic	Percent (of total sentences)
Poverty	11	26.2%
Mobility	12	28.8%
Second Language Learning	10	23.8%
Isolation	9	21.4%

Table 21 shows the topic of mobility occurred most frequently within the statements. This is not surprising given the migratory lifestyle. However, what is surprising is this study included students who generally moved fewer times than the average migrant student, which is once every three years (or four times during the school career) according to the U.S. Department of Education. Forty-one of the 50 students (82%) in this study moved three times or fewer during their school careers. Even given this high percentage of students moving fewer times than the national expectation for migrant students, mobility is still a topic that is clearly on the minds of almost 29% of the students.

None of the student statements actually used the terms "poverty," "mobility," "second language learning," and "isolation". Rather, sentences and phrases such as the following were used to describe impoverished conditions:

- "I have my own room for the first time in my life."

- "My parents pick crops all day and can barely put food on our table."
- "It is hard to see your friends wearing new clothes and all you have to wear are hand-me-downs."

Individual statements found in student "Take Along Folders" and in the student essays are included in Appendix C by category.

Analysis of specific statements. Statements concerning mobility and isolation specifically address the importance of family in the lives of migrant students. For example, the statement, "My family means everything to me," supports the quantitative data concerning the higher graduation rate for students who live with their families. Clearly the student who made this statement had the full support of his/her family and proceeded through young adulthood with the confidence that the family would provide support and assistance along the way. Another example of clear expectations from the head of the household that family is the center of the home is this statement: "My father says home is where your family is."

Further examination of the quantitative data revealed other information. For example, students who attended school in the U.S. and Mexico had a higher graduation rate than students who only attended classes in Mexico; however, qualitative data show these students struggle to bridge two cultures. Students wrote,

- "I feel like I am living between two cultures."
- "It is hard living in the U.S. when you have family in Mexico."
- "I am the oldest in my family and remember living in Mexico. My younger brothers and sister do not remember Mexico. Thus, when I miss Mexico, I have nobody to talk with. I do not talk with my parents about missing Mexico because I

know they miss it too. It hurts my father that we had to leave, but he wanted to work and there was not work in Mexico."

Other struggles students wrote about involve the tension between work and school. Quantitative data show the majority of students who did not graduate did not attend school in the U.S. and were living on their own. These students chose not to attend school, but to work and send money to their families in Mexico (Wrigley, personal communication, September 7, 2001). Statements made by students who chose to stay in school further support this struggle:

- "It is hard to concentrate when you know your family needs for you to be working instead of sitting in school."
- " I have to work and go to school. I enjoy both, but wish I could concentrate on one at a time. When I am working, I am thinking about doing my homework and when I'm at school, I am thinking about getting to work on time."

Also of particular interest is the 24% of students who wrote about second language issues. Only six of the 50 students in this study did not receive ESL services through the Migrant Education Program, meaning their English skills were proficient enough. According to the IDEA Test of Language Proficiency, they did not need supplemental ESL services. Of the students in this study who wrote about their proficiency in English, only two showed confidence in their use of the language:

- "My English is very good."
- "I have to spend four hours a night on homework because my English is not very good and people say I am dumb because I do not know English."
- "Learning English was hard for me at first, but it is easier for me now."

- "Sometimes, I get upset because I cannot think of an English word to express my feelings."

The issue of social isolation is complex for Hispanic migrant students according to Medina (1982) and Wax (2001). Social separation happens at many high schools. It is a part of high school life and at diverse schools, can omit Hispanic students from many social activities (Wax, 2001). Twenty-one percent of students in this study wrote about their feelings of isolation, including statements such as:

- "Sometimes I feel lonely. It is hard to be social because homework and my job do not leave me much time to hang out."
- "Students in school tend to hang in groups. Since I work and do not have time to join an after school club, it is hard for me to fit in."
- "I feel like I am living between two cultures, which is very difficult when you are one of three Hispanic students in the whole school."

Chapter 5

EMERGING THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The intent of this study was to analyze data on current 18 and 19-year-old Virginia Migrant Education Program Hispanic students to identify common factors among students who earned a high school diploma as compared with those who did not. Data reviewed included the students' age, gender, home language, number of schools attended, rate of attendance, and participation in educational programs, grade promotion/retention, graduation status, and family structure.

Quantitative data were gathered from student records and classified into school-related and contextual factors. These data are presented in Tables 1 - 19 in Chapter 4. Qualitative data were gathered from student essays and categorized into predetermined themes based upon a review of the literature. These findings are reported in Chapter 4, Tables 20 - 21.

This study sought to understand which educational experiences yielded successful high school completion for migrant students. The total group of 50 included all Virginia Migrant Education Program students who were 18 or 19 as of June 30, 2000. Of this group, 11 graduated and 39 did not. The non-completer group included 28 single men who never enrolled in a U.S. school when they arrived from Mexico. The researcher did not anticipate this circumstance; however, it does reflect a current trend in Migrant Education Program enrollment according to Patience Jones, Migrant Education Program Coordinator at the Virginia Department of Education (Jones, 2001). Therefore, the researcher chose to analyze all data to determine the effects of the variables on the

population. What follows is a breakdown of common factors existing between students in these two groups: Completers and non-completers.

Limitations of the Study

One limitation beyond those stated in Chapter One was identified and must be considered in light of the findings reported in this study. As stated in Chapter One, the sample was limited to students enrolled in the Virginia Migrant Education Program during school year 1999-2000 who were 18-19 years old as of June 30, 2000. This created a sample of 50 participants; however, of these 50 participants, 28 were not enrolled in Virginia schools at the time data was collected. This issue limited the researcher's ability to collect accurate and complete data, especially for the number of siblings contextual factor for the group of non-completers. Thus, the researcher was not able to determine whether number of siblings was a significant factor for students in this sample. Also, since these 28 men did not enroll in school, they were included as non-completers in the study. Actually, they did not have the opportunity to complete high school since they were never enrolled. This means of the 39 non-completers, only the results for 11 yielded information pertinent to this study.

Another limitation in data collection involved obtaining complete information concerning whether a student had been referred for special education services. The only data collected was whether a student actually received special education services. During the study, the researcher found it would have made for more complete data to have also ascertained whether the participants were ever referred for special education services.

Summary of Findings

Common School-related and Contextual Factors among Virginia Migrant Education Program Student Completers

Research Questions 1 and 2

Research Question 1:
What common school-related factors exist among Hispanic Migrant Education Program students who earned a high school diploma in Virginia?

Research Question 2:
What common contextual (i.e. family, language, work) factors exist among Hispanic Migrant Education Program students who earned a high school diploma in Virginia?

Of the 11 students completing high school, 91.0% (10 of 11) did not receive special education services and were not retained at any grade level in their school career. The common school-related factor with the next highest percentage for completers is school attendance in two countries and participation in ESL instruction. Seventy-two percent (8 of 11) of students attended schools in both the U.S. and Mexico and received ESL instruction. Also, 63.7% of students attended school in only one state. Data for the other common factors range from 9 - 36.4 percent. Straight frequency counts and the equivalent percentages for all school-related factors, both for completers and non-completers, are included in Chapter 4.

Common School-related and Contextual Factors among Virginia Migrant Education Program Student Non-Completers

Research Questions 3 and 4

Research Question 3:
What common school-related factors exist among Hispanic Migrant Education Program students who did not earn a high school diploma in Virginia?

Research Question 4:
What common contextual (i.e. family, language, work) factors exist among Hispanic Migrant Education Program students who did not earn a high school diploma in Virginia?

Seventy-eight percent (39 of 50) of students in this study did not complete high school, which is higher than the national dropout rate for Migrant high school students of 45% - 65% across three studies (Levy, 1987; Vamos, 1992; Latinos in Education, 1999).

Of the non-completers, 94.9% (37 of 39) of students did not receive special education services. The next highest percentage, 92.3% (36 of 39), received English as a Second Language instruction. Sixty-nine percent of these students received ESL instruction outside of school in evening adult ESL classes at their migrant camps. Eighty-seven percent (34 of 39) of students were not retained during their school careers. Interestingly, 28 (71.8%) students attended school only in Mexico. These 28 men never enrolled in a U.S. school once they arrived from Mexico. The researcher did not anticipate this circumstance; however, it does reflect a current trend in Migrant Education Program enrollment according to Patience Jones, Migrant Education Program Coordinator at the Virginia Department of Education (Jones, 2001). Therefore, the researcher chose to analyze all data to determine the effects of the variables on the population. Percentages for the other school-related factors ranged from 9-38.5 and are included in Chapter 4.

Discussion of Findings

School-Related Factors

School Attendance

Prior to any data interpretation it is important to note this study included only 50 participants as presented in Chapter 4. The graduation rate for students in this study was 22%, considerably lower than the national average for migrant high school students,

which ranged from 35% - 55% in three studies (Levy, 1987; Vamos, 1992; Latinos in Education, 1999). What are possible reasons for this below-average graduation rate?

One obvious consideration must be the number of single men (28) who were included in this study because they received Migrant Education Program services in their camps at night. Their goal however, was to learn English for on-the-job communication purposes, not to take classes in preparation for high school completion. This was a concern to Patience Jones, Migrant Education Program Coordinator at the Virginia Department of Education, who noticed more single men coming to Virginia to work, thereby increasing the number of out-of-school youth (dropouts) being served in Virginia's migrant education programs (personal communication, October 25, 2001). This study reflects this trend since 28 of the 50 participants were dropouts, representing 72% of the non-completers in this study. This group of non-completers only attended school in Mexico, but received ESL instruction in their Virginia migrant camps at night. Students who attended schools only in the U.S. or in both the U.S. and Mexico graduated while those who only attended schools in Mexico did not, suggesting attendance in U.S. schools positively impacts a migrant student's chance of completing high school.

Number of Schools Attended

According to the literature review in Chapter 2, traveling from one school to another limits the academic success rate of migrant children (Gabbard, Mines & Boccalandro, 1994). However, in this study, the number of schools attended by the highest percent of completers was four and the number of schools attended by the highest percent of non-completers was two. These data contradict the research set forth by Gabbard, Mines and Boccalandro. The fact that completers attended more schools than

non-completers, coupled with the data reported in the previous section about school attendance in Mexico, suggest the number of schools attended was not as important for students in this study as was attendance in U.S. schools or other factors.

Country in which Students Attended School

Both straight frequency counts and the Chi-Square analysis show a significant relationship between school attendance in the U.S. and graduation. The largest percent of completers attended schools in both the U.S. and Mexico while no students who attended school solely in Mexico graduated. This is primarily due to the 28 single men who never enrolled in school when they arrived in the U.S. Since they did not enroll, they did not have an opportunity to graduate. This study should be repeated using Virginia Migrant Education Program students who are 18 and 19 years of age as of June 2001 and 2002 to determine whether the sample in this study was typical for Virginia or whether the study contained an unusually high number of participants who did not enroll in school once they arrived from Mexico.

Special Education Services

The Chi-Square analysis for this factor indicated the independent variable (special education services) had no observable effect on the dependent variable (graduation). Only three students in this study received special education services; however, these data do not indicate whether or not students were ever referred for special education services. This is an important distinction according to Katy Pitcock, who has worked with the Virginia Migrant Education Program in the Winchester/Harrisonburg area for 25 years. According to Pitcock (personal communication, January 16, 2001), migrant students may begin the child study process, but do not stay long enough in one location to complete the

testing and evaluation necessary for determining eligibility for special education services. Although the record of this initial process is supposed to be included in the school transcript when it is forwarded to the student's new school, many times it is forgotten and not referenced. Parents do not fully understand the process, their parental rights, and the rights of their children, so either the process is started over again or is dropped. Both of these circumstances impact the ability of the school to provide timely and appropriate special education services to migrant students. This concern will be addressed later in this chapter under "recommendations for further research" and "limitations of the study."

English as a Second Language Instruction

Eighty-eight percent of students in this study received English as a Second Language instruction with 72% (36 of 50) not completing high school. Remember 28 of the 36 non-completers receiving ESL instruction were not enrolled in school, but received ESL instruction in the migrant camps at night. If we subtract these 28 from the 36 non-completers who received ESL instruction, 8 of the 50 students who were enrolled in school and received ESL instruction did not graduate. This is the same number of completers who were enrolled in school, received ESL, and graduated (Chapter 4, Table 10). This finding is substantiated through the Chi-Square analysis that also shows no significance for the ESL common factor and graduation. This was a surprise to the researcher since most Virginia Migrant Education Programs spend significant amounts of money on ESL programs. This practice should be more closely examined if participation in ESL programs is not significant in terms of graduation.

Retentions

Twelve percent of students in this study were retained during their school careers. One graduate and five non-completers were retained (Chapter 4, Table 12). Appendix A shows at which grade level each of these students was retained. The Chi-Square analysis yielded a p value of .737, meaning the independent variable (student retention) had no observable effect on the dependent variable (graduation). This was to be expected given the small number of students who were retained.

Contextual Factors

Age

Fifty-two percent of students in this study were not on grade level. This is slightly higher than national data from the Migrant Student Record Transfer System, which shows 50% of migrant students in grades 9-12 on grade level. Almost 64% (7 of 11) of the completers were 19 years old when they graduated. Almost 49% (19 of 39) of the non-completers were 19 years old when they dropped out. This means a total of 52% (26 of 50) of the students in this study were not on grade level. Being below grade level is considered a drop out risk factor, especially for migrant students (Shulman, 2001).

Gender

The gender data in this study is quite interesting. Of the 50 students, 40 were male and 10 were female. As seen in Table 22, 15% (6 of 40) of the males and 50% (5 of 10) of females completed high school.

Table 22 also illustrates the overwhelming disparity in the high percent of males in the study (80%) and the much smaller percentage of males who completed high school (55%). Conversely, the number of female participants was 20% and 45% of them

completed high school. These data concur with the large number of single men (28) not enrolled in school and working toward high school completion. If these 28 men are removed from the 34 males who did not graduate since they had no opportunity to graduate because they were not enrolled in school, 12 males were enrolled in school and 6 graduated. This brings the actual graduation rate for males to 50%, which is equal to that of females. These data also have ramifications for program planning, effective practice, and further research, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Table 22. High School Completion Rates by Gender

Gender	Number In Study	Percent of Total In Study	Number Completing High School	Percent of Total Completing High School
Males	40	80%	6	55%
Females	10	20%	5	45%

Family Structure

The data concerning student family structure is quite compelling, with 82% of completers living with both parents and only 20.5% on non-completers living with both parents. Also 82% of completers reported living with extended family while no non-completers reported living with extended family. The Chi-Square analysis for immediate family structure supports this significance with a p value of .001 (Chapter 4, Table 15). These data suggest the importance of family in the life of migrant students and indicate the migrant students in this study who lived with their parents and extended family had a greater chance of completing high school than those who did not.

The importance of family was evident in conversations with students who did not graduate, did not attend school in the U.S., and were living on their own. These students

chose not to attend school, but to work and send money to their families in Mexico (Wrigley, personal communication, September 7, 2001).

Indeed, the importance of family was also evident in essays written by students who graduated. "My family means everything to me," is a qualitative finding that supports the quantitative data concerning the higher graduation rate for students who live with their families. Clearly the student who made this statement had the full support of his/her family and proceeded through young adulthood with the confidence that the family would provide support and assistance along the way.

Other examples of the importance of family are the following statements made by both students who graduated and some who did not:

- "It is hard to concentrate when you know your family needs for you to be working instead of sitting in school."
- "My father says home is where your family is."
- "It is hard living in the U.S. when you have family in Mexico."
- "I am the oldest in my family and remember living in Mexico. My younger brothers and sister do not remember Mexico. Thus, when I miss Mexico, I have nobody to talk with. I do not talk with my parents about missing Mexico because I know they miss it too. It hurts my father that we had to leave, but he wanted to work and there was not work in Mexico."

Number of Siblings

The Chi-Square analysis was not conducted for the independent variable, number of siblings, because only 44% of the data can be considered accurate concerning the number of siblings in the students' homes. The reason for this discrepancy is that 28 of

the 37 students who reported having one sibling also reported living on their own. It is clear these 28 single men reported only having one sibling in the home (themselves) so the data does not reflect the actual number of siblings in the families of these young men. Thus, the data would be more reliably studied by subtracting the 28 single men from the 37 who reported having one or two siblings in the home. Based upon this available data, nine students reported having 1-2 siblings, nine students reported having 2-4 siblings, and four students reported having 4-7 siblings. Based on this analysis of the data, no apparent pattern concerning number of siblings and graduation can really be determined.

Position in Family

The same deficiency in data collection, which plagued the common factor for siblings, also affected this variable. The 28 single men did not report accurate information concerning their position in the family because they are living on their own and consider themselves independent from their families in Mexico. Of the 22 students who provided complete family information, most students reported being the first child in the family with the same number (5) of student completers holding the first and second position in the family (Chapter 4, Table 19). Of the 11 non-completers who were not single men and reported complete family information, six reported being first in the family, three were second, and two were fourth. Given this data, the Chi-Square analysis for the independent variable, student position in family, was not conducted.

Qualitative Findings

Upon review of 50 student essays, the researcher determined 40% of students were concerned with one or more of the following issues: Poverty; mobility; English as a Second Language; and, social isolation. Chapter 4 and Appendix C include detailed

analysis and examples of student statements concerning these issues. Of the four issues, mobility was mentioned most frequently (Chapter 4, Table 21) in the student essays. This is to be expected considering the special population being studied; however, students in this study moved less often than average migrant students, which is once every three years (or four times during their school career) according to the U.S. Department of Education.

Implications

Specific Action is Needed to Change Educational Outcomes for Students

Hispanic migrant students live with stress including: the devastating effects of their elders' limited employment opportunities; personal prejudice; and, social bias. They internalize the message that "The American dream is not for me" and drop out of school (Lockwood & Secada, 1999). Even so, according to the Hispanic Dropout Project's (1998) final report, *No More Excuses*, schools and communities can take specific actions to change educational outcomes for migrant Hispanic students.

According to Mehan (1996) it is only through changing the nature of our discussion of the dropout problem that we can begin to create solutions. Previously, dropping out was viewed as a "character flaw, a personal pathology, or an individual choice" (Mehan, 1996, p.1). Clearly, the students in this study who did not complete high school did not make this conscious choice; rather, their educational opportunities were limited by bureaucratic complacency coupled with a public acceptance of 40 years of disproportionate Hispanic dropout rates. Mehan (1996) believed dropping out is a societal problem perpetuating and reproducing structures of inequity in the educational,

economic, and civic domains of life. The 78% dropout rate for students in this study suggests the case is proven for migrant Hispanic students in Virginia.

McDermott and Varenne (1995), Fine (1991), Swadener and Lubeck (1995), Trueba, Spindler, and Spindler (1989), and this researcher intended to turn the prevailing discourse about dropping out as a failure of individuals into one furnishing a different "way of talking that can unpack, inform, critique but still imagine what could be" (Fine, 1991, p. xiii). Graduation should be attainable for all students, including all migrant Hispanic students in Virginia. To realize this vision, however, current practice needs to accept no other possible outcome for students.

All students should be treated with "unconditional positive regard" (Hanny, personal communication, December 14, 2001). Each student should be encouraged to pursue his/her "American dream" with his/her family supporting this goal. James Coleman's (1990) theory of "social capital" supports the importance of a network of sustained personal connections to convey expectations and conventional norms, which can be acquired through rich and extensive interaction with adults. The development of social capital by children is significant because it contributes to their readiness to internalize school norms and expectations, which are necessary for a student to accept the "American dream" as his/her own. The importance of this personal investment on the part of students is also substantiated by Marcelo and Carola Suarez-Orozco (2001) who studied the social context from the "psychocultural" perspective.

The Suarez-Orozcos, both professors at Harvard University, conducted a study involving 27 Harvard researchers who recorded interviews with students and educators tracking student grades, living situations, immigration history, religious backgrounds,

perceptions of American racial discrimination, teachers' treatment of students, students' treatment of each other, and how the social/emotional context of school can drive the achievement gap. "Social engagement is very, very powerful. If they [students] are not socially engaged, they are not going to invest in themselves or in school" (Suarez-Orozco, 2001, p. 14).

Those who work with migrant students need to continue to strengthen each student's family through sustained personal connections that cause the family to be invested in the community and the student to be socially engaged. Further, advocates for migrant students need to work to change the public policies which have allowed our society to accept 40 years of disproportionate Hispanic dropout rates. It is this researcher's contention that changing these behaviors will have tremendous impact on the educational outcomes for migrant youth.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Further Research

This study leaves a number of questions related to the academic success of Migrant Education Program students unanswered and suggests the following recommendations for further research:

1. Since all students who reported only attending school in Mexico did not complete high school, further research of instructional programs in Mexico is needed along with the coordination of these programs with U.S. instruction.

2. Since all non-completers in this study reported living with no extended family and 82% of completers reported living with extended family, further research is necessary to determine the specific nature of this support system.

3. The research questions from this study could be investigated with a larger sample to determine if the trends revealed in this study were a result of the small sample size.

4. More complex designs could be used to study the role of Migrant Education Program (MEP) staff in service coordination between (a) instructional programs in the U.S. and Mexico, (b) the MEP and local school divisions, and (c) the family and school.

5. Since more males participated in this study, but more females graduated, the difference in outcomes for male and female migrant education students could be investigated more thoroughly.

6. The issue of access to special education services for migrant students warrants further investigation.

Recommendations for Practice

This study offers a number of recommendations for practice.

1. Based upon a review of the literature and the statistics presented in Table 14, more should be done to attract and retain Hispanic males in school.

2. The findings in this study indicate the importance of family in academic outcomes for migrant Hispanic youth; therefore, efforts to actively involve Hispanic families in school should be increased.

3. The results of this study indicate educational program coordination between the U.S. and Mexico should be strengthened.

4. Student statements indicate feelings of isolation and the difficulty of bridging

two cultures. Classroom teachers working with migrant Hispanic students should receive special in-service training so they are sensitive to the unique needs of this special population.

5. Virginia Migrant Education Program staff must continue to strive for complete student records, both as students arrive in Virginia and when they leave, to assure special education records are included in the student's transcript.

References

Alwang, J., Lamie, D. & Trupo, P. (1997, December). *The Impact of Migrant, Seasonal and H-2A Farm workers in the Virginia Economy*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Migrant Worker Policy Committee, Richmond, VA.

Anderson, G. (1998). *Fundamentals of educational research*. London: Falmer Press.

Anyon, J. (1988). Social class and the hidden curriculum of work. In J.R. Gress (Ed.), *Curriculum: An introduction to the field* (pp. 366-389). Berkeley, CA: McCutchan.

Arkin, J. H. (1999). *A content analysis of state legislative responses to educator assault*. Doctoral dissertation, The College of William & Mary in Virginia, Williamsburg. Ann Arbor: UMI Dissertation Services.

Asche, J. (1993). *Finish for the future: America's communities respond*. Alexandria, VA: National Association of Partners in Education, Inc.

Atkin, B. (1993). *Voices from the fields*. New York: Little Brown and Company.

Baca, L., & Harris, K. C. (1988). Teaching migrant exceptional students. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 20*(4), 32-35.

Benton, J. (2001, May 22). No Easy Answers: Complex factors feed disproportionate Hispanic dropout rate. *The Dallas Morning News*, online.

Berelson, B. (1971). *Content analysis in communication research*. New York: Hafner.

Berg, B. L. (2001). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (1992). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Borg, W. R., & Gall, J. P. (1989). *Educational research* (5th ed.). White Plains, NY: Longman Publishers.

Borja, R. (2001, August 7). Virtual high schools gain following. *The Richmond Times-Dispatch*, online.

Budd, R. W., Thorp, R. K., and Donohew, L. (1967). *Content analysis of communications*. New York: The Macmillan Company.

Castro, S., and Nichols, S. (1996, April). *Project SMART: Distance Learning Migrant Education Program*. Paper presented at the National Migrant Education Conference, South Padre Island, TX.

Coleman, J. (1990). *Foundations of Social Theory*. Cambridge: Harvard University Belknap Press.

Cummins, J. (1986). Empowering minority students: A framework for intervention. *Harvard Educational Review*, *56*, 18-36.

Cummins, J. (1989). Empowering minority students. Sacramento: California Association of Bilingual Education.

De Mers, D. (1988, November). Migrant Programs Meet Unique Challenges. *National Head Start Bulletin*, pp. 2-3.

Espinosa, L. (1998). School Improvement and Hispanic Parents. *The Prevention Researcher*, 5, 1, 5-7.

Fine, M. (1991). *Farming dropouts: Notes on the politics of an urban high school*. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press.

Fiske, J. (1994). *Key concepts in communication and cultural studies.* N.Y., N.Y.: Routledge, Inc.

Frey, L. R., Botan, C. H., Friedman, P. G., & Kreps, G. L. (1992). *Interpreting communication research: A case study approach.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Gabbard, S., Mines, R., & Boccalandro, B. (1994). *Migrant farm workers: Pursuing security in an unstable labor market.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy.

Gabbard, S., Mines, R., & Steirman, A. (1997). *A Profile of U.S. Farm Workers Demographics, Household Composition, Income and Use of Services.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy.

Gall, J., Borg, W., & Gall, M. D. (1999). *Applying Educational Research: A Practical Guide. (4th ed.).* New York: Longman.

Gareis, C. R. (1996). *The characteristics and degrees of de facto consensus concerning the mission of K-12 public education in Virginia.* (Doctoral dissertation, The College of William & Mary in Virginia, Williamsburg). Ann Arbor: UMI Dissertation Services.

Gay, L. R. (1996). *Educational Research.* (5th ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

General Accounting Office. (1997). *High school dropouts highest among minority groups.* Washington, D. C.: author.

General Accounting Office. (1996). *Hispanic dropout rate becoming a national crisis.* Washington, D.C.: author.

General Accounting Office. (1994). *Elementary school children: Many change schools frequently, harming their education.* Washington, D.C.: author.

General Accounting Office. (1987). *School dropouts: The extent and nature of the problem.* Washington, D.C.: author.

Gerbner, G., Holsti, O. R., Krippendorff, K., Paisley, W. J., & Stone, P. J. (Eds.). (1969). *The analysis of communication content: Developments in scientific theories and computer techniques.* New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Gilchrist, C. (1983). *Addressing the vocational / employment needs of migrant youth.* Rocky Hill, CT: Connecticut Migratory Children's Program. (ERIC Reproduction Service No. ED237262)

Guffain, C. A. (1991). *The unique characteristics of the migrant population and the correlation to their high dropout rate prior to completion of high school.* Bureau of Compensatory Education, Orlando: Unpublished Document.

Hardy, R. (1996). Examining the Cost of Performance Assessment. *Applied Measurement in Education, 8*, 121-134.

Hispanic Dropout Project (1998). *Final Report: No More Excuses.* Washington, DC: Office of the Under Secretary, U.S. Department of Education.

Holsti, O.R. (1969). *Content analysis for the social sciences and humanities.* Reading, MA: Addison Wesley Publishing Company.

Huang, G. (1993). *Health problems among migrant farm workers' children in the U.S.* ERIC Digest. Charleston, WV: ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools.

Kaufman, P., & Frase, M. (1990). *Dropout Rates in the United States:*

1989. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

Krippendorff, K. (1980). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology.* Beverly Hills CA: Sage Publications.

Latinos in education: Early childhood, elementary, secondary, undergraduate, graduate. (1999). Washington, DC: The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans. (ERIC Abstract).

Levy, R. (1987). *Migrant attrition project.* Oneonta, NY: Eastern Stream Center on Resources and Training.

Lockwood, A., & Secada, W. (1999, January). *Transforming education for Hispanic youth: Exemplary practices, programs and schools* (No. 12). National Council for Bilingual Education Resource Collection Series.

Mathews, J. (2001, November 14). Area schools rank high in graduating minorities. *The Washington Post*, online.

Martin, P. (1994). *The endless quest: Helping America's farm workers.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Martinez, O. (1994). *Border People: Life and Society in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands.* Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Martinez, Y., Scott, J., Cranston-Gingras, A. & Platt, J. (1994). Voices from the fields. *The Journal of Educational Issues of Language Minority Students, (14)*, 333-348.

Masten, A. S., & Coatsworth, J. D. (1998). The development of competence in favorable and unfavorable environments: Lessons from successful children. *American Psychologist, 53*, 205-220.

McDermott, R. P., & Varenne, H. (1995). Culture as disability. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 26*(3), 324-348.

Medina, A. (1982). *Migrant student dropouts: A summary of three years of study.* Corpus Christi, TX: Education Service Center, Region II.

Mehan, H. (1996). *Contextual factors surrounding Hispanic dropouts.* Paper prepared for the Hispanic Dropout Project. Washington, DC: Office of the Under Secretary, U.S. Department of Education.

Morales, J. (1984). *Educational options for migrant secondary students.* Oneonta, NY: Interstate Migrant Secondary Service Program, SUNY Oneonta.

MPR Associates. (1992). *Characteristics of at-risk students in NELS: 88.* Washington, D.C.: author.

National Commission on Migrant Education. (1992). *Invisible children: A portrait of migrant education in the United States. Final Report.* Washington, DC: Author. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED348206)

Mines, R., Gabbard, S., & Steirman, A. (1997). *National Agricultural Workers Survey: A profile of U.S. farm workers, demographics, household composition, income and use of services.* Washington, D.C.: Office of the Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of Labor.

Nelken, I., & Gallo, K. (1978). Factors influencing migrant high school students to drop out or graduate from high school. Chico, CA: Nelken and Associates, Inc. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED164245)

New York State Department of Education. *Work-study programs for potential dropouts.* Albany, NY: Author, 1965.

Nieto, S. (1995). *Affirming diversity: The sociopolitical context of multicultural education.* New York: Longman Publishing Group.

Ortiz, V., and Volkoff, W. J. (1987). *Evaluation report of the Rural and Migrant Gifted Project.* Fresno, CA: Fresno Office County of Education.

Rasmussen, L. (1988). *Migrant students at the secondary level.* ERIC Digest. Las Cruces, MN: ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools.

Reed-Victor, E. & Stronge, J.H. (1998). Building resiliency: Constructive directions for homeless education. *Journal of Children and Poverty, 3*(1), 67-92.

Riffe, D., Lacy, S., & Fico, F. G. (1998). *Analyzing media messages: Using quantitative content analysis in research.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Rumberger, R., Larson, K., Palardy, G., Ream, R., & Schleicher, N. (1998, October). *The hazards of changing schools for California Latino adolescents.* California Policy Seminar Brief Series.

Salerno, A. (1991). *Migrant students who leave school early: Strategies for retrieval.* Charleston, WV: Rural Education and Small Schools. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED237125)

Schaller, J. (1975). The relationship between geographic mobility and school behavior. *Man-Environmental Systems, 5*, 185-187.

Shulman, R. (2001, June 11). Doors opening for migrant students. *The Los Angeles Times*, online.

Simeonsson, R. (1994). *Risk Resilience & Prevention: Promoting the Well-Being of All Children.* Portland: OR: Book News, Inc.

Slaughter & Associates (1991). *The education of adult migrant farm workers.* Woodland Hills, CA: U.S. Department of Education.

Smith, T. (1995, September). *The Educational Progress of Hispanic Students.* Findings presented at the Condition of Education Conference, Washington, DC.

Study: Graduation rates 'implausibly high'. (2001, November 14). *The Washington Times*, online.

Suarez-Orozco, C. & Suarez-Orozco, M. (2001). *The Children of Immigration: The Developing Child.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Swadener, B., & Lubeck, S. (Eds.). (1995). *Children and families "at promise:" Deconstructing the discourse of risk.* Albany: State University of New York Press. (ED 398311)

Trotter, R.T. (1988, April). *An ethnographic study of migrant farm worker educational opportunities.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Education al Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

Trueba, H.T., Spindler, G., & Spindler, L. (Eds.). (1989). *What do anthropologists have to say about dropouts?* New York: The Falmer Press.

United States Bureau of Census. (1990). *Current population survey.* Sacramento, CA: California Department of Finance.

United States Bureau of Census. (1999). *National dropout rates by recency of immigration and by race /ethnicity.* Washington, D.C: Government Printing Office.

United States Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (1989). *Dropout rates in the United States.* Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

United States Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (1995). *Dropout rates in the United States*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

United States Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (1998). *Dropout rates in the United States*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

United States General Accounting Office. (1994). *Elementary school children: Many changes in schools frequently harming their education* (GAO-HEHS-94-95). Washington, DC. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED369126)

Vamos, Inc. (1992). *National migrant student graduation rate formula, for the national program for secondary credit exchange and accrual.* Genesco, NY: BOCES Genesco Migrant Center.

Vazquez, L. (1996). *Warning signs of student dropout.* NY: Aspira.

Vega-Lugo, Z. (1995). *Student mobility K to 12: Impact on Hispanic-serving schools.* Testimony provided to the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans. Arecibo, Puerto Rico: Universidad Inter Americana de Puerto Rico.

Walsh, C. (1991). Literacy and school success: Considerations for programming and instruction. In C. Walsh & H. Prashker (Eds.), *Literacy development for bilingual students*. Boston: New England Multifunctional Resource Center for Language and Culture Education.

Wax, E. (2001, May). Latino Teens Yearn for a Voice. *The Washington Post*, p. A1.

Weber, James M. (1990). "The Role of Vocational Education in Decreasing Dropout Rate." Ohio State University, Columbus, OH: Center for Research in Vocational Education, 1985. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED264444)

Weber, J. (1990). Leading the Instructional Program. In S.C. Smith & P.K. Piele (Eds.), *School Leadership: Handbook for Excellence* (2nd ed., pp. 191-224). Eugene, Oregon: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED309504)

Wetzstein, C. (2001, November 14). Study: Graduation rates "implausibly high." *The Washington Times*, online.

Wood, D., Halfon, N., Scarlata, D., Newacheck, P., & Nessim, S. (1993). Impact of family relocation on children's growth and development, school function, and behavior. *Journal of the American Medical Association.* 1334-1338.

Yanez, T. (1996, April). *Project SMART: Distance Learning Migrant Education Program.* Paper presented at the National Migrant Education Conference, South Padre Island, TX.

Appendix A
SUMMARY OF STUDENT FINDINGS: SCHOOL-RELATED FACTORS

Student Number	Number of schools attended	States where student attended school	Countries where student attended school	Total days in school during school year 1999-2000	Total days in summer school	Did student receive ESL instruction?	Did student receive Special Education services?	Number and grade level of student retentions	Graduation Status (Yes, No, GED)
1	2	VA	US, Mexico	171/180	0	No	No	0	Yes
2	3	None	Mexico	0	0	Yes	No	0	No
3	3	None	Mexico	0	0	Yes	No	0	No
4	4	NC, VA	US, Mexico	175/180	0	Yes	No	0	Yes
5	3	None	Mexico	0	0	Yes	No	0	No
6	3	None	Mexico	0	0	Yes	No	0	No
7	4	None	Mexico	0	0	Yes	No	0	No
8	3	None	Mexico	0	0	Yes	No	0	No
9	3	None	Mexico	9	0	Yes	No	0	No
10	3	None	Mexico	0	0	Yes	No	0	No
11	3	VA	US, Mexico	138/180	12/20	No	Yes	0	Yes (in Mx)
12	2	None	Mexico	90/180	9/20	Yes	No	0	No
13	2	None	Mexico	0	0	Yes	No	0	No
14	3	VA	US, Mexico	176/180	0	Yes	No	0	Yes
15	3	VA	US, Mexico	180/180	20/20	Yes	No	0	Yes
16	2	None	Mexico	0	0	Yes	No	0	No
17	2	None	Mexico	0	0	Yes	No	0	No
18	2	None	Mexico	0	0	Yes	No	0	No
19	2	None	Mexico	0	0	Yes	No	0	No
20	2	None	Mexico	0	0	Yes	No	0	No
21	2	None	Mexico	0	0	Yes	No	0	No
22	2	None	Mexico	0	0	Yes	No	0	No
23	2	None	Mexico	0	0	Yes	No	0	No
24	2	None	Mexico	0	0	Yes	No	0	No
25	2	None	Mexico	0	0	Yes	No	0	No

Appendix A
SUMMARY OF STUDENT FINDINGS: SCHOOL-RELATED FACTORS

Student Number	Number of schools attended	States where student attended school	Countries where student attended school	Total days in school during school year 1999-2000	Total days in summer school	Did student receive ESL instruction?	Did student receive Special Education services?	Number and grade level of student retentions	Graduation Status (Yes, No, GED)
26	3	None	Mexico	0	0	Yes	No	0	No
27	5	VA, TX, FLA	US, Mexico	93/180	0	Yes	No	0	GED
28	2	None	Mexico	0	0	Yes	No	0	No
29	4	VA, FLA	US, Mexico	173/180	0	Yes	No	1 (1st in Mx)	No, LPT
30	4	VA, FLA	US	167/180	0	Yes	Yes	1	No
31	3	VA	US, Mexico	90/180	0	Yes	No	0	No
32	3	VA	US, Mexico	90/180	0	Yes	No	0	No
33	2	VA	US	175/180	0	No	No	0	Yes
34	2	None	Mexico	0	0	Yes	No	0	No
35	3	None	Mexico	0	0	Yes	No	0	No
36	2	None	Mexico	0	0	Yes	No	0	No
37	4	VA, GA	US, Mexico	164/180	0	Yes	No	0	GED
38	3	VA, Michigan	US, Mexico	45/180	0	Yes	No	0	No
39	3	VA	US, Mexico	69/180	0	Yes	No	0	No
40	2	VA, FLA	US	153/180	0	Yes	No	10th	No
41	3	VA	US, Mexico	174/180	0	No	No	0	No
42	2	None	Mexico	0	0	Yes	No	0	No
43	2	None	Mexico	0	0	Yes	No	0	No
44	3	VA	US, Mexico	90/180	0	No	No	0	No
45	4	VA	US, Mexico	175/180	13	Yes	No	0	Yes
46	5	VA	US, Mexico	172/180	11	Yes	No	0	Yes
47	2	VA	US, Mexico	174/180	0	Yes	No	4th	No
48	4	VA, NC	US, Mexico	166/180	7	Yes	No	9th	GED
49	2	None	Mexico	0	0	Yes	No	0	No
50	2	VA	US, Mexico	164/180	0	No	Yes	1	No

Appendix B
SUMMARY OF STUDENT FINDINGS: CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

Student Number	Age	Gender	Father and mother live in student's home	Only father lives in student's home	Only mother lives in student's home	Student lives with extended family in the home	Number of siblings in home	Student's position in family
1	19	M	Yes	No	No	No	2	First
2	19	M	No	No	No	No	1	
3	19	M	No	No	No	No	1	
4	18	F	Yes	No	No	Yes	2	Second
5	19	M	No	No	No	No	1	
6	19	M	No	No	No	No	1	
7	18	M	No	No	Yes	No	1	
8	19	M	No	No	No	No	1	
9	19	M	No	No	No	No	1	
10	19	M	No	No	No	No	1	
11	19	F	Yes	No	No	No	2	Second
12	19	F	No	No	No	No	1	
13	19	M	No	No	No	No	1	
14	19	M	No	No	No	No	1	
15	19	M	Yes	No	No	No	5	Second
16	19	M	No	No	No	No	2	Second
17	19	M	No	No	No	No	1	
18	19	M	No	No	No	No	1	
19	19	M	No	No	No	No	1	
20	19	M	No	No	No	No	1	
21	18	M	No	No	No	No	1	
22	19	M	No	No	No	No	1	
23	18	M	No	No	No	No	2	Second
24	18	M	No	No	No	No	1	First
25	18	M	No	No	No	No	1	

Appendix B:
SUMMARY OF STUDENT FINDINGS
CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

Student Number	Age	Gender	Father and mother live in student's home	Only father lives in student's home	Only mother lives in student's home	Student lives with extended family in the home	Number of siblings in home	Student's position in family
26	18	M	No	No	No	No	1	
27	19	F	Yes	No	No	No	4	Third
28	18	M	No	No	No	No	1	
29	18	M	Yes	No	No	No	4	Fourth
30	18	F	Yes	No	No	No	4	First
31	18	M	No	No	No	No	1	
32	18	M	No	No	No	No	1	
33	18	M	Yes	No	No	No	7	Second
34	18	M	No	No	No	No	1	
35	18	M	No	No	No	No	1	
36	18	M	No	No	No	No	1	
37	18	M	Yes	No	No	No	3	First
38	18	M	No	No	No	No	1	
39	19	F	Yes	No	No	No	3	First
40	18	M	Yes	No	No	No	5	First
41	18	M	Yes	No	No	No	2	First
42	18	M	No	No	No	No	1	
43	18	M	No	No	No	No	1	
44	18	M	Yes	No	No	No	4	Second
45	19	F	Yes	No	No	No	2	First
46	19	F	Yes	No	No	No	3	First
47	18	F	Yes	No	No	No	7	Fourth
48	19	F	No	No	Yes	Yes	3	First
49	19	M	No	No	No	No	2	Second
50	19	M	Yes	No	No	No	4	First

Appendix C

Sample of Written Statements found in Student "Take Along (Work) Folders" According to Themes

(These statements were taken from a statewide essay competition, sponsored by the U.S. Marshall's Office, about being a migrant student in Virginia.)

Poverty	Mobility	Second Language Learning	Isolation
"It is hard to concentrate when you know your family needs for you to be working instead of sitting in school".	"It is hard to leave your friends. It is hard for me to make new friends once I enroll in a new school."	"I have to spend about four hours a night on homework because my English is not very good and people say I am dumb because I do not know English very well."	"I feel like I am living between two cultures, which is very difficult when you are one of three Hispanic students in the whole school."
"I have to work and go to school. I enjoy both, but wish I could concentrate on one at a time. When I'm working I am thinking about doing my homework and when I'm at school, I am thinking about getting to work on time."	"I'm fortunate, our family has not moved as much as some I have known. And, we have been able to stay together. Some families have to leave their children with relatives while the parents go away to work. I wouldn't like that."	"I think knowing two languages is very neat, but some of my American friends are jealous. They tease me if I speak Spanish in the halls with other Mexicans.	"It is hard living in the U.S. when you have family in Mexico. My mother has not seen her mother in nine years."
"My family is building our first house with Habitat for the Humanity. When we move in I will have my own room for the first time in my life. It has been hard work, but Spanish kids have to try harder in life. Having less makes you try harder."	"Each time we move I have to leave some of my things behind because we never have the room in the van to move everything. So, I do not have any of my childhood dolls like my friends do."	"My mother does not speak English so I have to translate everything for her. Sometimes I get tired of that."	"I am the oldest in my family and remember living in Mexico. My younger brothers and sisters do not remember Mexico. Thus, when I miss Mexico, I have nobody to talk with. It hurts my father that we had to leave, but he wanted to work and there was no work in Mexico.
"I visited the Nation's Capital and could not believe the marble and big buildings. I wonder how much it costs to maintain all that and how the government can do that while my parents pick crops all day and can barely put food on our table."	"My family means everything to me. Even though I do not like moving a lot, I know my family loves me and that we move to work and make a living for the family."	"My English is very good. I do not speak Spanish very much and sometimes worry that I will forget it."	"Sometimes I feel lonely. It is hard to be social because homework and my job do not leave me much time to hang out."
"It is hard to see your friends wearing new clothes and all you have to wear are hand me downs. Nonetheless, I know my parents are working as hard as they can to make a nice home for our family."	"I see how upset my mother gets each time we move. It seems we just start to get settled and then it is time to move again. My father says home is where your family is."	"Learning English was hard for me at first, but it is easier for me now. Sometimes, I get upset because there is not an English word to express my feelings. I can sincerely express myself in Spanish, but the English equivalent is sometimes lacking."	"Students at school tend to hang in groups. Since I work and do not have time to join an after-school club, it is hard for me to fit in."